

CAMP HILL, Pa. (Jan. 30, 2024) — Taking care of your teeth may be good for your brain: Researchers from Yale University found a strong connection between poor oral and brain health.

In a study that was [published online](#) in *Neurology* this past December, data from more than 40,000 middle-aged adults was used to investigate whether poor oral health is associated with select biological indicators, called neuroimaging markers. These markers are indicative of injury to white matter, which communicates with gray matter where processing in the brain occurs.

"These findings suggest a potential cause-and-effect relationship between oral and brain health, building on a growing body of research that's telling us more about the mouth-body connection," said Roosevelt Allen, DDS, MAGD, ABGD, chief dental officer, United Concordia Dental. "We know that taking care of your mouth can have a positive impact on conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and [Alzheimer's and dementia](#). It's exciting to see that there's a strong likelihood that it can improve brain health too."

Among study participants, 14% (5,470) were categorized as having poor oral health, defined as loose teeth or dentures, with harmful brain structure changes in three neuroimaging metrics. This group also had a higher prevalence of smoking, hypertension, diabetes and obesity.

The study had two stages: one using self-reported oral health information and another with genetically determined poor oral health to confirm these associations. Individuals with a prior history of stroke or dementia were excluded, as the neuroimaging markers used were known risk factors for both conditions. The study's researchers found that since image changes were seen in scans of individuals without these conditions, there's a strong possibility oral health could be an early treatment option to improve brain health.

"What's clear from this research is that regular trips to your dentist, plus a good and consistent oral hygiene routine, can help put you on the right track to achieving greater wellness," said Allen.

For more on oral health, visit the Oral Health Resources section at [UnitedConcordia.com](#).

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