

Featured

# New studies link gum disease to HPV causing oral cancer

A recent study has found yet another link between periodontal disease and other health problems. According to researchers at the University of Buffalo, USA, the presence of chronic gum inflammation (periodontitis) may leave the mouth more vulnerable to invasion by a virus that can cause cancers of the head and neck.

The culprit is Human Papilloma Virus, or HPV. It is sexually transmitted and, unfortunately, very common. HPV is a growing cause of oral cancer, with experts suggesting it may rival tobacco use as the main cause of oral cancer within ten years. Associations of HPV with cervical cancer have led the medical community to develop vaccines for girls and young women that protect against them against HPV and cervical cancer. It is unknown at this time whether these vaccines would have any effect against oral strains of HPV. The University of Buffalo study examined 124 patients who were diagnosed with



head and neck cancers. Forty percent of the patients had tumours that showed the presence of HPV. Of the HPV-positive tumours, 65 percent were in the oropharyngeal region that includes the back of the mouth, the tonsils and base of the tongue, and the larynx or vocal cords. A link with periodontal disease was shown by the fact that the HPV-positive patients had greater loss of the bone that surrounds the teeth. And those with more bone loss had more HPV- positive tumours. In fact, the relationship was so strong that the researchers were able to predict whether or not a patient had such a

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## This month...

*Research keeps mounting about the importance of keeping your mouth clean and healthy. HPV oral strains now have implications for your health. Check out our feature for more.*

*Jenna talks about new teeth cleaning gadgets and gives the run down on who they'll work best for.*

*We're sharing the stories of some local heros in our communities. We've gotten behind them and hope you will too. Even a dollar helps.*

*Lastly, graduation day has finally arrived!*

*Happy Easter!*

*Dr Simon Franks*



> continued

tumour by looking at the amount of bone loss around their teeth.

Another study carried out at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden also suggested failure to brush teeth properly could increase the chance of premature death resulting from cancer. They found a link between high levels of dental plaque - the cause of gum disease - and dying from cancer up to 13 years earlier than previously expected.

The reality is that most of us will suffer from gum disease at some point in our lives, yet it is entirely preventable. By developing and keeping a good oral health routine, it lowers the risk of gum disease and any possible links to more serious diseases. We should all take time to reflect on how we can make that a reality!

Simply, if you have swollen gums that bleed regularly when brushing, bad breath, loose teeth or regular mouth infections appear, it is likely you have gum disease. It is also vital to check regularly for early warning signs of mouth cancer. These include ulcers which do not heal within three weeks, red and white patches in the mouth and unusual lumps or swellings in the

mouth. That's why at every examination at Bite Dental, we take the time to check not only your teeth, but also your gums, cheeks, lips, on and under your tongue for any signs of mouth cancer.

These findings are making periodontists and clinicians take seriously the need for good oral care in relation to overall health. So the bottom line, according to Dr Tezal, the lead author of the study: *"Prevention or treatment of sources of inflammation in the oral cavity may be a simple yet effective way to reduce the acquisition and persistence of oral HPV infection."*

### Community

#### Local heroes

#### Lee Henri is at it again for the RSPCA!

Lee annually donates time & enthusiasm for the RSPCA's Annual Million Paws Walk

Last year, she & Team Elly raised the 2nd highest in the state and 4th highest in Australia with \$4400 and this year their goal is to hit the big \$5K!

Bite Dental are proud supporters of the RSPCA. The big day is on Sunday 18th May. Help Team Elly to support the wonderful work of the RSPCA. Donate now at:

<https://mpw-qld-2014.everydayhero.com/au/team-elly-1>



Celebrate everyday heroes. Let us know if you have a cause you'd like us to shout about.

#### Rob & Team Smiddy

*Smiling for Smiddy* honours the memory of Adam Smiddy, who passed away to an aggressive cancer in 2006 aged just 26. More than \$4 million has been raised for cancer research and support services since.

Rob, of the Bite community is training hard for the cause right now for this year's cycling Smiddy challenge & we are right behind him!

Chances are you've seen cancer affect someone close to you. Set yourself an inspired cycling or triathlon challenge, feel the spirit, find yourself and fund a cure.

[www.smiddy.org.au](http://www.smiddy.org.au)



### News

#### Graduation

Simon celebrates his graduation from the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons this month. A huge congratulations goes to him for that achievement after a gruelling three years. Enjoy the ceremony!

**Healthy Hygiene Hints**

**Should I get an irrigator? Oxyjet VS Waterpik**

An oral irrigator is a gadget that produces a fine water jet in rapid pulses. They're popular and everybody wants to know if they're the secret to throwing away that annoying floss? The short answer is YES, they work—but they're not for everyone. If you have:

- gaps between your teeth due to gum disease;
- bridges and around dental implants;
- difficulty cleaning due to arthritis/stroke/disability;
- braces.

Then a water-jet irrigator can be a fantastic ADDITION to a brush and flossing. If you have good teeth and healthy gums, you only need to brush and floss properly.

Remember to hold the jet at 90° to the tooth & lean over the sink with your mouth half closed—they can make a mess!

Waterpik or Oxyjet? Neither is better so it's your choice!

**Jenna**