

# Combating diabetes and heart disease with oral care: new research could save the NHS £124 million a year

Research over the past 30 years reveals two things about our bodies:

- More people with diabetes and heart disease have gum disease (periodontitis) than healthy people
- People with periodontitis are at a greater risk of developing diabetes or heart disease

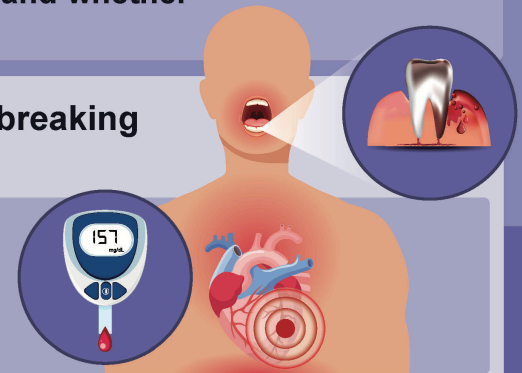


But until very recently, it was unclear why this association exists and whether treating one of these diseases could help treat the others

Prof D’Aiuto from UCLH BRC, who had been leading groundbreaking research in this field, finally found some answers

Periodontitis causes inflammation beyond the gum, in various parts of the body

This is at the root of the increased risk of diabetes and heart disease in people with gum disease



These findings opened up new opportunities to develop treatments

Through a pilot project and clinical trials, it was found that treating periodontitis also reduced



This research has informed the Office of the Chief Dental Officer and led to the publication of the NHS Commissioning Standard "Dental Care for People with Diabetes" (2019), which, for the first time, recommends integrating care pathways for patients with diabetes and gum disease



Due to better oral care, and thus, fewer GP visits and lower drug bills, the NHS predicts savings of **£124 million** in the care of people with diabetes

Similar oral care recommendations for heart disease will hopefully reflect in the UK’s policy soon, taking these diseases down from their position as two of the country’s leading causes of disability and death