

Healthy habits for lower blood pressure:



Choose fresh foods low in salt and sugar.



Exercise regularly.



Maintain a healthy weight.



Reduce stress, sleep well.



Take your medication.



Limit alcohol.



Cut back on caffeine.



Quit tobacco.
1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)



Ask your dentist to check your blood pressure.

For more information on oral health, visit health.maryland.gov/oral-health.



MARYLAND
Department of Health

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or disability in its health programs and activities.

English

Help is available in your language:
410-767-5300 (TTY: 1-800-735-2258).
These services are available for free.

Español/Spanish

Hay ayuda disponible en su idioma:
410-767-5300 (TTY: 1-800-735-2258).
Estos servicios están disponibles gratis.

Chinese

中文
用您的语言为您提供帮助: 410-767-5300
(TTY: 1-800-735-2258). 这些服务都是免费的

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HEART DISEASE AND ORAL HEALTH
Your mouth is the gateway to your body.

The health of your mouth can affect your overall health, including the health of your heart.

Gum (Periodontal) Disease

If germs stay on your teeth for too long, it can lead to early gum disease, called gingivitis — red, swollen, tender or bleeding gums. Unless this infection is treated, the bacteria can invade surrounding bone and supporting structures that hold teeth in place. If this progresses, your entire body can react to the infection that began in your mouth.

Inflammation causes problems in other parts of the body.

Inflammation is the body's natural response to an infection. Experts think that as inflamed blood vessels swell less blood may flow to the heart, raising blood pressure.

Bacteria can enter the bloodstream through the gums and become part of the fatty plaques (a buildup of fat, cholesterol, calcium and other substances) in blood vessels.

A heart attack occurs when fatty plaques block a blood vessel leading to the heart.

Eliminate smoking and improve your overall health.

Smoking is related to gum disease and heart disease. Smoking weakens your body's immune system, which makes it harder to fight off a gum infection. Once you have gum damage, smoking also makes it harder for your gums to heal.

Need help quitting?

The Maryland Tobacco Quitline is a free service provided by MDH to help people quit using tobacco products.

Call **1-800-QUIT-NOW**

(1-800-784-8669) for free telephone-based counseling, support, and tips to help you quit smoking for good.

You can also visit **smokingstopshere.com**.

Keep your mouth and heart healthy.

- See your dentist regularly. If you have a heart condition, tell your dentist
- Provide your dentist with a list of any medications that you take before your appointment
- Good oral hygiene habits help prevent infections. Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste at least twice a day and floss at least once a day. Maintain a healthy diet that is low in sugar

You may need to take special precautions if you have:

1. A prosthetic heart valve or have had a heart valve repaired with prosthetic material;
2. A history of endocarditis;
3. A heart transplant with abnormal heart valve function; or
4. Certain congenital heart defects.

If needed and prescribed by your dentist or physician, take an antibiotic before your dental appointment.