



Dr. Charles Picchioni

# Dental PEARLS...

*"The mouth is the window to good general health."*

In 30 years of practicing dentistry and being on the medical staff at several health care facilities, I have come to realize that it is a challenge to have good general health without good oral health. Medicine and dentistry share in the common goal to improve the health and quality of life for every patient. A growing body of evidence points to oral health being part of systemic health.

Dental visits today should begin with a thorough review of each patient's health and physician history and current medication and allergy data. A blood pressure measurement should be taken at a patient's first visit and thereafter to qualify patients for their dental care. In addition, oral cancer screenings, tooth surface wear from bruxism, and sleep apnea risk factors are part of today's dental visits.

With 600 species of bacteria, fungi, and viruses found in the oral cavity, 100 systemic diseases, and 500 medications all having oral manifestations, one can see the bidirectional relationship clearer between medicine and dental health.

Since chewing, speech, swallowing, and digestion start in the oral cavity, preventing and eliminating cavities and plaque is where it all begins. Tooth decay (caries) results from the breakdown of dental enamel/dentin by lactic acid when bacteria

digest fermentable carbohydrates. It takes only an hour for a cavity to begin its destruction on a tooth's surface. Fortunately, with fluoride toothpastes and routine oral hygiene, these cavities can be reversed and prevented.

The bacteria in plaque that adheres to tooth and root surfaces at and below the gum line are part of a group of chronic immune inflammatory diseases we know as gingivitis and periodontitis. This plaque bacteria causes bleeding gums, swelling, and attachment and bone loss. The systemic association of this bacterial plaque is when the by-products of inflammation constantly enter the bloodstream, generating an immune response that links to the development or exacerbation of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke, rheumatoid arthritis, and pre-term low-weight babies. Respiratory diseases have shown oral plaque pathogens aspirated, contributing to pneumonia and sometimes death.

Studies and my personal patients have shown that eliminating the oral bacterial plaque significantly lowered their A1C lab numbers and improved their metabolic control. That's an amazing statement for a disease affecting 30 million people.

Primary patient prevention at home—with floss, mouthwashes, water picks, and electric toothbrushes—is the best approach to plaque control. It's this daily, habitual regimen along with routine professional dental cleanings that guarantee a healthy mouth as the key to a healthy body.

My office and I welcome those with further interest by contacting us at 610.525.2861 or [www.drcharlespicchioni.com](http://www.drcharlespicchioni.com).

## Nothing exudes beauty and confidence like a bright, vibrant smile.

- General, cosmetic and restorative dental services for the entire family.
- The highest quality care in a friendly and comfortable environment equipped with the latest innovative technology.
- Dr. Picchioni and his office staff believe that everyone deserves to experience the life-altering benefits of a radiant, healthy smile.



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### Charles A. Picchioni, DMD, PC

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LUMINEERS

