

## **Gum Health is Whole-Body Health**

As you get older you tend to neglect your teeth (one-third to one-half of adults in North America don't make their yearly dental check-up, and only 36 per cent of women and 14 per cent of men floss even four times a week), which is a big reason why 75 per cent of adults have some form of gum disease.

When that happens, the health issues aren't just in your mouth. Gum disease increases the risk for kidney cancer by 49 per cent, pancreatic cancer by 54 per cent and blood cancers by 30 per cent. It also ups the chances for type 2 diabetes and related complications, rheumatoid arthritis, impotence, memory dysfunction and Alzheimer's disease. There's still debate about whether it triggers heart disease; the American Heart Association says no. But we think the proof is out there. Clearly, you want to brush up on your dental routine.

Fortunately, we've got two smart ways to give your whole body a reason to smile.

1. Brush, rinse, floss. Brush your teeth for at least two minutes twice a day; floss once; and use a non-alcohol-based mouthwash (the alcohol may contribute to risk for oral cancer).

Opt for the two C's: Crunchy foods (apples, celery and carrots are tooth-brushing wonders), and a cuppa tea (green or black - both kill bad bacteria).

From the article, "Zinc key to good health," by Drs. Oz and Roizen. (2012, November 8).