

## *Be Antibiotic Wise*

In November 2019, the American Dental Association published new guidelines regarding the use of antibiotics to manage dental pain and swelling in individuals who do not have a compromised immune system. Basically, the new scientific evidence suggests that antibiotics are not a treatment of choice (and can actually increase other risks) and only dental treatment is recommended. Additionally, over-the-counter pain medications should be used, if needed.

The 17-member panel that developed the guidelines concluded that: *"Dental treatment without antibiotics is often sufficient to manage a dental infection, but when it is not available and the patient has signs and symptoms such as fever or swollen lymph nodes, antibiotics may need to be prescribed"*, and that *"when adults have a toothache and access to dental treatment, antibiotics may actually do more harm than good."*

---

## *Gum Disease May Raise Hypertension (high blood pressure) Risk*

"People with gum disease may be at increased risk for high blood pressure", Nicholas Bakalar, NY Times.

In an extensive Cardiovascular study, where the results of 81 different studies were combined and compared, it was revealed that people with a diagnosis of gum disease were 20 percent more likely to have high blood pressure than those with healthy gums. The results also showed that the more severe the gum disease, the higher the risk for high blood pressure. Moderate periodontal (gum) disease was associated with a 22 percent increased risk of hypertension, and severe gum disease increased the risk to 49 percent.

Statistically, about a third of adults in the United States have high blood pressure, and almost half of Americans 30 years and older have some degree of gum disease. Studies have not yet documented if control or treatment of gum disease will result in controlling or lowering blood pressure in people who suffer from both conditions. However, there is clear indication--and studies that have shown--that gum inflammation is not healthy for the general health of the individual. Furthermore, there is also evidence that gum disease directly, or indirectly, can affect coronary heart problems.

It is not a far leap then to assume that controlling and treating gum disease will, at the very least, minimize additional health risks, including, perhaps, the risk of developing or living with high blood pressure.

We encourage you to get annual check-ups and to consult with your Plan Participating Dentist.

Healthy habits lead to good and positive outcomes.