

[IMAGE]

## Save Your Teeth and They'll Save You

By Editorial Staff

You gotta love your teeth, and not for the reasons you'd generally think of when assessing their value. Yes, teeth are great for the obvious reasons: chewing food. But your teeth – specifically, the more you lose during middle age – could actually determine whether you develop heart disease.

Let us explain. While previous research suggests overall dental / gum health may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, a new study explores whether the number of teeth you lose influences your CVD risk. According to the research, which analyzed data over a six-year period from men and women (45-69 years of age and without heart disease at the start of the study), losing more than one tooth during middle age increased the risk of cardiovascular disease by 16 percent compared to not losing any teeth, regardless of the number of teeth retained at the start of the study.

The risk for CVD was even higher in subjects with only 25-32 natural teeth at study inception (the normal human adult has 32 teeth) who lost two or more teeth during the study period: a 23 percent higher risk. And for subjects with pronounced tooth loss to begin with (fewer than 17 natural teeth), losing two or more additional teeth increased CVD risk by 25 percent.

It's important to note that 1) Losing just one tooth during the study period did not significantly increase CVD risk; and 2) The relationship between tooth loss and CVD risk was observed even when accounting for other factors that could cause cardiovascular disease, including poor diet, lack of exercise, excess body weight, high blood pressure, etc.

So save your teeth and they'll save you! Talk to your doctor about how diet and other easily modifiable lifestyle factors can influence dental and heart health.

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