

Alzheimer's & Oral Health Connection

Alzheimer's disease is a complex neurodegenerative condition influenced by various factors, including emerging links to oral health. Research highlights the role of oral bacteria, mercury toxicity, and inadequate oxygenation from obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) in cognitive decline, underscoring the importance of maintaining oral health for brain health.

Oral Bacteria & Brain Health¹

Studies show that bacteria like *Porphyromonas gingivalis*, associated with gum disease, can travel to the brain, triggering inflammation and releasing neuron-damaging toxins called gingipains. Chronic brain inflammation, a hallmark of Alzheimer's, may partly result from oral bacteria. Practicing good oral hygiene, managing gum disease, and regular dental check-ups are essential for reducing bacterial growth and its potential impact on the brain.

Mercury Toxicity from Amalgam Fillings²

Amalgam fillings containing mercury can release low levels of vapor that may enter the bloodstream and reach the brain. Mercury exposure has been linked to neurotoxicity, oxidative stress, and inflammation, all risk factors for neurodegeneration. Patients with old or damaged fillings should consult a dentist trained in safe removal and replacement, though not all fillings require immediate action.

Inadequate Oxygenation from Obstructive Sleep Apnea³

Obstructive sleep apnea reduces oxygen levels during sleep, causing brain hypoxia, which can damage brain cells and contribute to Alzheimer's. OSA is also associated with cardiovascular issues and systemic inflammation. Treatments such as CPAP therapy, dental devices, or lifestyle changes can improve oxygenation and reduce brain damage risks.

Taking Oral Health Seriously - A Key Step in Alzheimer's Prevention

Maintaining oral health is vital for cognitive health. Regular visits to a dentist familiar with oral-systemic connections can help manage gum disease, evaluate fillings, and address OSA signs early. Taking proactive steps to reduce inflammation, toxicity, and hypoxia supports brain health and lowers the risks of neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's.



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¹ Dominy, S. S., et al. (2019). *Porphyromonas gingivalis* in Alzheimer's disease brains: Evidence for disease causation and treatment with small-molecule inhibitors. *Science Advances*, 5(1), eaau3333.

² Mutter, J., et al. (2004). Amalgam studies: Disregarding basic principles of mercury toxicity. *International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health*, 207(4), 391-397.

³ Osorio, R. S., et al. (2015). Associations between sleep apnea and biomarkers of Alzheimer's disease in cognitively normal adults. *Neurology*, 84(5), 557-563.