



## 7 Benefits of a Dental Exam (Other than Keeping Your Teeth!)

- Oral Cancer exam:** One American dies every hour from oral cancer. Early detection saves lives. 25% of oral cancer cases occur in individuals who have never smoked and have no other lifestyle risk factors. Other less known risk factors include sunlight exposure, HPV infection and smokeless tobacco use.
- Sleep Apnea and Mouth Breathing Disorders:** Dentists are often the first health [professionals](#) to detect signs of sleep apnea and disordered breathing by signs and symptoms seen in the mouth. Some of the complications of sleep apnea are hypertension, arrhythmias and cognitive impairment.
- Assessment of Medication causing harm to teeth and gums:** Many commonly used prescription and non-prescription drugs have a drying effect on the mouth (xerostomia), which is directly correlated with increased tooth decay and gum disease. Dentists can help assess the oral effects of the drugs and make recommendations for alternative medications or measures to take to counteract the harmful effects of necessary medications.
- Headache, earache and neck pain assessment:** When no other cause of head, ear, or neck pain can be found, a dental exam can often shed light on dental causes for such pain. Poor tooth alignment, TMJ dysfunction or poor fitting dental appliances can lead to referred pain to muscles and cause nerve inflammation in the head and neck area. A complete medical evaluation for chronic head and neck pain should [include a comprehensive dental exam](#).
- Pre-Pregnancy check up:** Clinical evidence shows that poor oral hygiene and poor dental health during pregnancy can adversely affect the health of the newborn. Oral bacteria, inflammation and hormonal changes are a powerful combination that can breach the placenta and reach the fetus. Women with uncontrolled gum disease have a higher rate of pre-term labor. The special time of pregnancy is NOT the time to have dental pain and emergencies. [Schedule an appointment NOW!](#)
- Osteoporosis risk:** Both osteoporosis and gum disease share a number of risk factors. Accelerated bone loss around teeth may be due to systemic factors associated with osteoporosis. Conversely many drugs (bisphosphanates) used to treat osteoporosis can lead to serious jawbone degeneration if dental infections or broken teeth are present.
- General systemic health assessment:** Many diseases have early manifestations in the oral tissues. Diabetes, heart disease, blood disorders, many infectious disease and gastric-intestinal disorders all show early signs in the mouth. Likewise, dental and oral diseases can have a profound effect on [general health](#).