

A low level of the antioxidant glutathione may be associated with periodontal disease - periodontal disease is characterized by inflammation - inflammation brings up CRP levels - elevated CRP levels may indicate a risk of heart disease - a risk of heart disease may be reduced by an increased intake of antioxidants - elevated levels of the antioxidant glutathione may help prevent periodontal disease.

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### Protection & prevention

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The upcoming results of more extensive studies (such as the NIH periodontal/heart disease study) will be needed to further define the gray areas of this cycle. But for the time being the UK study offers promising evidence that antioxidants (and specifically glutathione) may prove to be an important defense against periodontal disease.

So, what's the best way to raise glutathione levels? One way NOT to do it is by oral supplement. Taking glutathione orally is regarded as ineffective because the molecules are too big to pass through the intestinal walls to the blood stream. There is, however, an important amino acid I've told you about in previous e-Alerts, called N-acetylcysteine (NAC) that gives a powerful boost to your body's natural production of glutathione.

The food sources that deliver glutathione precursors are meats and fresh fruits and vegetables. But even with a diet high in the proteins that supply glutathione amino acids, one of those amino acids - cysteine - is more difficult than the others to come by. A natural food component with high concentrations of glutathione precursors (including cysteine) is milk-serum-protein concentrate - more simply known as whey.

If you've been diagnosed with periodontal disease, or if you're currently undergoing treatment for it, share this information with all of your health care providers - physician, dentist, periodontist - knowing that an important key to both gum and heart health may be as simple as enhancing your production of glutathione and increasing your intake of other antioxidants.

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