Link Between Systemic Health and the Mouth

- Cardiovascular disease
- Gastrointestinal or colorectal cancer
- Insulin resistance and diabetes
- Alzheimer's disease
- Respiratory tract infections

Dry Mouth
- Clinically referred to as "xerostomia"
- Can be caused by medications like antihistamines & antidepressants
- 40% of individuals aged 50 years old and greater experience dry mouth
- Reduces antibacterial activity
- Loss of important saliva properties that cause remineralization

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References


Nutrition, Systemic Health, and Cavities in the Geriatric Population
How are they linked?
**What is a cavity?**

Cavities are portions of demineralized hard tissue called enamel. The enamel wears away, forming holes for various reasons:
- Bacteria in the mouth are feeding on leftover foods rich in carbohydrates
- Acidic mouths can lead to enamel erosion (outer layer of enamel diminishes), where cavities can form more easily
- Improper brushing and flossing

**Prevention**

Methods to prevent cavities include:
- Brushing your teeth 2 times daily, using circular strokes
- Floss daily
- Eat healthy
- Visit your dentist/dental hygienist twice annually

**Nutritional Tips**

**Foods that may lead to cavities contain:**
- Sugar
- Starches

**What you can do to avoid cavities:**
- Avoid items listed above
- Choose healthy snacks such as cheese, nuts, and leafy greens
- Swish with water after snacks/meals when a toothbrush isn't available
- Choose water over sugary beverages

**Age can contribute to cavities**

Cavities in the elderly population is highest among all age groups:
- Elderly patients living on their own have less cavities than those living in long-term care facilities
- A reduction in salivary flow is common, having the greatest impact on cavity prevalence
- Root cavities are the most common type of cavity as people age