



# THE MIND-MOUTH CONNECTION



## HOW MENTAL HEALTH AFFECTS ORAL HEALTH



### The Hidden Effects of Stress on Your Smile

- ✗ Neglect of Oral Hygiene – Stress and depression can lead to forgetting to brush and floss.
- ✗ Unhealthy Habits – Stress increases nail-biting, smoking, and sugary cravings.
- ✗ Increased Cortisol – This stress hormone weakens your gums, increasing the risk of gum disease.

#### What You Can Do:

- ✓ Set reminders to brush twice daily.
- ✓ Drink plenty of water and eat a balanced diet.
- ✓ Avoid tobacco and limit sugary snacks.

### Teeth Grinding (Bruxism) & Jaw Pain

Bruxism = Unconscious Teeth Grinding, Often Caused by Stress! Signs You May Be Grinding Your Teeth: Worn-down or chipped teeth Jaw pain, headaches, or ear pain Clicking sound when opening the mouth

#### How to Prevent It:

- ✓ Wear a nightguard while sleeping.
- ✓ Reduce stress with meditation or breathing exercises.
- ✓ Avoid caffeine and alcohol before bed.

### SLEEP DISORDERS & YOUR ORAL HEALTH

Sleep apnea & bruxism are linked to stress, leading to:

- ✗ Fatigue, irritability, and anxiety
- ✗ Increased tooth wear and jaw strain
- ✗ Higher risk of gum disease and cavities

#### Better Sleep, Healthier Mouth:

- ✓ Establish a bedtime routine.
- ✓ Avoid screens before sleep.
- ✓ Visit a dentist if you suspect bruxism or sleep apnea.

### STRESS & GUM DISEASE: THE CORTISOL CONNECTION

Chronic stress weakens the immune system and increases cortisol, leading to:

- Gum inflammation & bleeding
- Slower healing after dental procedures
- Higher risk of periodontitis (severe gum disease)

#### How to Keep Your Gums Healthy:

- ✓ Brush & floss daily to remove plaque.
- ✓ Reduce stress through mindfulness activities.
- ✓ Get regular dental checkups

### SIMPLE STRESS-RELIEF TECHNIQUES

- ✧ Mindful Breathing – Try deep belly breathing for relaxation. ✧
- Chewing Sugar-Free Gum – Helps with stress and stimulates saliva. ✧
- Journaling – Write down thoughts to clear your mind. ✧
- Stretching & Exercise – Reduces muscle tension and jaw clenching.