

# Dairy Food and Healthy Gums



Experts do not completely understand what the connection is between dairy food and healthy gums, but they do have at least a partial understanding:

- ▶ Dairy foods have a low acidity. Food that is less acidic means less wear-and-tear on the teeth.
- ▶ Dairy foods are rich in calcium, a key ingredient for building and keeping healthy teeth.
- ▶ Cheese contains calcium and phosphate. Both of these help people gain a healthy pH balance in the mouth. They also preserve and rebuild tooth enamel, help saliva production, and kill bacteria.

Someone who develops an untreated case of gingivitis, or gum disease, usually experiences a progression of the disease into a more serious case of periodontal disease that affects not only the gums but also the teeth and the bones supporting the teeth. This bacterial infection results in the loss of teeth, and it can spread through your body. It is also connected to heart disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, and respiratory disease.

This disease, and its consequences, are something that millions of adults struggle with on a daily basis. You don't want to be one of them. To that end, you want to keep your gums healthy so you can prevent all kinds of periodontal disease. Consider making dairy products a regular part of your daily diet. In addition, of course, preventive care is also important: regular checkups, brushing, flossing, and using mouthwash.

If you do develop periodontal disease even though you've worked hard to prevent it, then your first concern should be to get prompt treatment as early as possible. After all, gingivitis is relatively easy to cure. With the correct dental care, your gum disease can be effectively treated in a short amount of time. That treatment will protect both your teeth and your overall health, making it possible for you to enjoy your life for many years to come.

You probably already know how important dairy food is when it comes to keeping your bones healthy. You may also be aware that dairy food can help you achieve your weight-loss goals.

But did you know the lactic acid found in many dairy products are also beneficial when it comes to oral health? More specifically, lactic acid can be found in dairy products such as milk, cottage cheese, and yogurt.

In January 2008, a study was published in the *Journal of Periodontology* by Dr. Yoshihiro Shimazaki. This journal is the official journal for the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP). Dr. Shimazaki teaches at Kyushu University in Fukuoka,

Japan in the Department of Preventive Dentistry. In the study, 942 people between the ages of 40 and 79 were examined for periodontal pocket depth and clinical attachment loss, both of which are important measures for periodontal disease. The researchers found that study participants who ate 55 g per day or more of foods that contained lactic acid were much less likely to experience deep periodontal pocket depths and severe clinical attachment loss than participants who ate less than 55 g per day.