

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS **RESEARCH SUMMARY**

TOPIC: AVOID GREEN AND STAY CLEAN: HEART HEALTH IN A TUBE
REPORT: MB #4878

BACKGROUND: Coronary artery disease, otherwise known as CAD, is the most common type of heart disease in the United States. It is sometimes called coronary heart disease or ischemic heart disease. CAD is caused by plaque buildup in the walls of the arteries that supply blood to the heart, called coronary arteries, and other parts of the body. Plaque is made up of deposits of [cholesterol](#) and other substances in the artery. Plaque buildup causes the inside of the arteries to narrow over time, which can partially or totally block the blood flow, a process called atherosclerosis.

(Source: https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/coronary_ad.htm)

SYMPTOMS AND RISKS OF CAD: Angina, or chest pain and discomfort, is the most common symptom of Coronary Artery Disease otherwise known as CAD. Angina can happen when too much plaque builds up inside arteries, causing them to narrow and narrowed arteries can cause chest pain because they can block blood flow to your heart muscle and the rest of your body. For many people, the first clue that they have CAD is a [heart attack](#). Symptoms can include but are not limited to chest pain or discomfort (angina), weakness, light-headedness, nausea, or a cold sweat, pain or discomfort in the arms or shoulder, or shortness of breath. Over time, CAD can weaken the heart muscle could and lead to heart failure. Being overweight, physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, and smoking tobacco are risk factors for CAD. A family history of heart disease also increases your risk for CAD, especially if you have a family history of having heart disease at an early age (50 or younger). If you have CAD, health care professionals may suggest lifestyle changes, such as eating a healthier (lower sodium, lower fat) diet, increasing physical activity, reaching a healthy weight, and quitting smoking to help lower your risk for heart attack or worsening heart disease. Medicines to treat risk factors for CAD, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or an irregular heartbeat and surgical procedures to help restore blood flow to the heart may also be recommend by healthcare professionals.

(Source: https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/coronary_ad.htm)

NEW STUDY LINKS PLAQUE AND HEART DISEASE:

To explore the connections between oral and heart health, Dr. Hasturk and her colleagues at Harvard Medical School used rabbits that were fed cholesterol-rich diets as a model to mimic human heart disease. Some of the rabbits were then infected with bacteria known to cause periodontal disease. Those rabbits developed atherosclerotic plaques that were less stable, and therefore more likely to cause a heart attack, and had higher blood levels of inflammation than the rabbits that had not been exposed to the gum disease bacteria. The researchers then treated the rabbits with an oral topical liquid that contained resolvins, which are molecules derived from omega-3 fatty acids believed to help quell inflammation. The treatment not only prevented periodontal disease in the infected rabbits, but also lowered inflammation and atherosclerosis. The findings highlight the potential connection between the two conditions. A study testing a related compound called lipoxin in people with gum disease is currently under way. To date, there's no proof that treating gum disease will prevent cardiovascular disease or its complications, but the connection is compelling enough that dentists, and many doctors, say it's yet another reason to be vigilant about preventing gum disease in the first place.

(Source: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/gum-disease-and-heart-disease-the-common-thread>)

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If this story or any other Ivanhoe story has impacted your life or prompted you or someone you know to seek or change treatments, please let us know by contacting Marjorie Bekaert Thomas at mthomas@ivanhoe.com