

Wellness and Longevity Dentistry – Beyond Traditional Dental Care

Canonical: <https://directory.coredental.com.au/dental-services/wellness-and-longevity-dentistry-beyond-traditional-dental-care-article/>

Description:

Wellness and Longevity Dentistry – Beyond Traditional Dental Care **Category:** Dental Services
Location: All Core Dental Group locations across Melbourne --- ## Your Mouth Is the Gateway to ...

Details:

Category: Dental Services **Location:** All Core Dental Group locations across Melbourne

Your Mouth Is the Gateway to Your Health

For decades, dentistry has been thought of in isolation — teeth and gums over here, the rest of your health over there. But a growing body of scientific evidence tells a very different story. Your oral health is deeply connected to your overall health, and the health of your mouth can influence — and be influenced by — conditions affecting your heart, your blood sugar, your airways, your immune system, and even how well you age.

At Core Dental Group, we're embracing this evidence. Our approach to wellness and longevity dentistry means looking beyond individual teeth and considering your oral health as part of your whole-body health picture. It's still rigorous, evidence-based dentistry — we're not replacing proven treatments with unproven alternatives. We're adding a layer of awareness, prevention, and holistic thinking that benefits your long-term wellbeing.

The Oral-Systemic Health Connection

The connection between your mouth and the rest of your body is well-documented and increasingly well-understood. Here are some of the most significant relationships:

Heart Disease and Cardiovascular Health

Research has established a consistent association between periodontal (gum) disease and cardiovascular disease. The bacteria that cause chronic gum inflammation can enter the bloodstream through inflamed gum tissue, contributing to:

- **Atherosclerosis:** Bacterial products and inflammatory markers from gum disease may promote the formation of arterial plaques (fatty deposits inside blood vessel walls), increasing the risk of heart attack and stroke
- **Endocarditis:** Oral bacteria entering the bloodstream can, in rare cases, colonise damaged heart valves, causing a serious infection called infective endocarditis
- **Inflammatory burden:** Chronic gum disease produces a persistent low-grade inflammatory response that may compound existing cardiovascular risk factors

This doesn't mean gum disease causes heart disease — the relationship is complex and involves shared risk factors (such as smoking, diabetes, and poor diet). But the evidence is strong enough that

maintaining healthy gums is now considered a meaningful component of cardiovascular risk management.

At Core Dental, when we treat gum disease, we're not just saving your teeth — we may be contributing to your cardiovascular health as well.

Diabetes

The relationship between diabetes and gum disease is bidirectional — each condition makes the other worse:

- ****Diabetes increases gum disease risk:**** People with poorly controlled diabetes have higher rates of periodontal disease. Elevated blood sugar reduces the body's ability to fight infection, including the bacterial infections that drive gum disease. - ****Gum disease worsens diabetes control:**** Chronic gum inflammation can increase insulin resistance, making blood sugar harder to control. Treating gum disease has been shown in some studies to improve HbA1c levels (a key measure of long-term blood sugar control) in patients with type 2 diabetes.

For patients with diabetes, or those at risk, thorough periodontal care is an important part of overall disease management. We work with your GP and endocrinologist to ensure your dental care supports your diabetes management plan.

Pregnancy and Oral Health

Pregnancy brings significant changes to oral health, and oral health can affect pregnancy outcomes:

- ****Pregnancy gingivitis:**** Hormonal changes during pregnancy increase susceptibility to gum inflammation, even with good oral hygiene. Red, swollen, bleeding gums are common, particularly in the second trimester. - ****Pregnancy tumours (granulomas):**** Non-cancerous, inflammatory growths can develop on the gums during pregnancy — they're uncomfortable but typically resolve after birth. - ****Preterm birth and low birth weight:**** Some research has linked untreated periodontal disease during pregnancy with an increased risk of preterm birth and low birth weight babies. While the evidence is still being refined, it supports the importance of dental care during pregnancy. - ****Morning sickness:**** Frequent vomiting exposes teeth to stomach acid, which can erode enamel. We can advise on protective strategies, including remineralising rinses and modified brushing techniques.

Dental treatment is safe during pregnancy (the second trimester is generally considered the ideal time for elective procedures), and we encourage expectant mothers to maintain their regular dental appointments.

Respiratory Health

The bacteria present in an unhealthy mouth can be aspirated (breathed) into the lungs, potentially contributing to:

- ****Pneumonia:**** Particularly in elderly patients, those in residential care, or immunocompromised individuals - ****Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) exacerbations:**** Poor oral hygiene has been associated with more frequent COPD flare-ups - ****Post-surgical lung infections:**** Good oral hygiene before surgery may reduce the risk of respiratory complications

This connection underscores the importance of oral health maintenance for older Australians and anyone with existing respiratory conditions.

Dementia and Cognitive Decline

Emerging research has identified associations between chronic periodontal disease and an increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. The bacterium *Porphyromonas gingivalis**, a key pathogen in gum disease, has been found in the brains of Alzheimer's patients. While

this research is still in its early stages, it adds another compelling reason to prioritise gum health throughout life.

Other systemic connections

The oral-systemic evidence base continues to grow. Other conditions with documented links to oral health include:

- **Rheumatoid arthritis:** Shared inflammatory pathways with gum disease
- **Kidney disease:** Chronic kidney disease patients are more susceptible to oral infections
- **Certain cancers:** Poor oral health has been associated with increased risk of some cancers, including oropharyngeal and pancreatic cancer
- **Osteoporosis:** May increase the risk of jaw bone loss and tooth loss

Biocompatible Materials

As part of our wellness approach, Core Dental considers the materials we use in your mouth. Biocompatibility — how well a material interacts with your body — is an important factor in treatment planning.

What this means in practice:

- **Tooth-coloured restorations:** We primarily use composite resin and porcelain/ceramic materials for fillings, inlays, onlays, crowns, and veneers. These materials are aesthetically superior and well-tolerated by the body.
- **Metal-free options:** For patients who prefer to avoid metal restorations, we offer metal-free alternatives for most applications, including all-ceramic crowns and bridges, and zirconia implant components.
- **Mercury-free dentistry:** We do not place new dental amalgam (silver/mercury) fillings. For patients who wish to have existing amalgam fillings replaced, we can do so safely, following established protocols to minimise mercury exposure during removal.
- **Material safety:** All materials we use are TGA-approved and have established safety profiles. We're happy to discuss the composition of any material before using it.

Biocompatibility is considered within an evidence-based framework — we don't reject proven materials based on unfounded claims, but we do offer alternatives when patients have preferences, sensitivities, or concerns about specific materials.

Airway-Focused Dentistry

Your dentist is uniquely positioned to observe signs of airway problems. Every time we examine your mouth, we can see your tongue, palate, throat, and jaw — structures that directly affect how well you breathe, especially during sleep.

Sleep-disordered breathing and obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA)

Obstructive sleep apnoea is a condition where the airway partially or completely collapses during sleep, causing breathing pauses, reduced oxygen levels, fragmented sleep, and daytime fatigue. It's surprisingly common — and significantly underdiagnosed.

Signs your dentist might notice:

- **Tooth grinding (bruxism):** Often linked to sleep-disordered breathing — the jaw muscles clench and grind as the body attempts to open a narrowing airway
- **Scalloped tongue:** Indentations along the edges of the tongue from pressing against the teeth, which can indicate a large tongue relative to the mouth
- **Narrow palate:** A high, narrow palate can restrict nasal airway volume
- **Worn or cracked teeth:** Excessive wear patterns that suggest night-time grinding
- **Acid erosion:** Gastro-oesophageal reflux, which is associated with OSA, can erode tooth enamel
- **Crowded teeth**

or retruded jaw:** Structural features that may predispose to airway obstruction

What we do:

At Core Dental, we screen for signs of sleep-disordered breathing as part of our comprehensive examinations. If we identify risk factors, we'll discuss them with you and, if appropriate, refer you to a sleep physician for formal diagnosis (typically a home sleep study or polysomnography).

For patients diagnosed with mild to moderate obstructive sleep apnoea, or those who cannot tolerate CPAP therapy, dental sleep appliances (mandibular advancement splints) can be an effective treatment option. These custom-made oral devices hold the lower jaw slightly forward during sleep, keeping the airway open.

We work collaboratively with sleep physicians and respiratory specialists to ensure your treatment is appropriate and effective.

Children and airway development

Airway-focused dentistry is particularly relevant for children. Mouth breathing, snoring, restless sleep, bedwetting, and behavioural issues in children can sometimes be linked to airway obstruction — often related to enlarged tonsils or adenoids, narrow dental arches, or other developmental factors.

Early identification and intervention can make a real difference. If we notice signs of potential airway issues in your child, we'll discuss them with you and recommend appropriate referrals.

Nutrition and Oral Health

What you eat affects your teeth and gums — and your oral health, in turn, affects what you can comfortably eat. This bidirectional relationship is central to wellness dentistry.

Key nutritional considerations:

- **Sugar and acid:** The well-known enemies of tooth enamel. Frequent sugar consumption feeds decay-causing bacteria, while acidic foods and drinks (including fruit juices, soft drinks, wine, and citrus) erode enamel directly. It's not just how much sugar you consume — it's how often. Frequent snacking or sipping creates a constantly acidic oral environment. - **Calcium and vitamin D:** Essential for strong teeth and jaw bones. Dairy products, leafy greens, fortified foods, and adequate sun exposure (or supplementation) support dental and skeletal health. - **Vitamin C:** Critical for gum health. Deficiency leads to weakened gum tissue and increased susceptibility to gum disease. - **Hydration:** Adequate water intake supports saliva production. Saliva is your mouth's natural defence system — it washes away food particles, neutralises acids, and delivers minerals to tooth surfaces. - **Anti-inflammatory foods:** A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, omega-3 fatty acids (from fish, flaxseed, walnuts), and whole grains supports a healthy inflammatory response throughout the body, including the gums.

At Core Dental, we provide practical dietary advice as part of our preventive care — not as nutritionists, but as dental professionals who understand how food choices directly impact oral health. For patients with specific nutritional needs or concerns, we're happy to recommend referral to a dietitian.

Preventive Focus — The Core of Wellness Dentistry

Prevention is the foundation of everything we do. Wellness and longevity dentistry isn't about adding exotic treatments — it's about doing the fundamentals exceptionally well and consistently.

Our preventive approach includes:

- **Risk-based care planning:** Instead of treating every patient identically, we assess your individual risk factors — including diet, oral hygiene habits, medical history, family history, and lifestyle — and tailor your care schedule and recommendations accordingly - **Early detection:** Using digital X-rays, intraoral cameras, and thorough clinical examinations to find problems at their earliest, most treatable stage - **Oral cancer screening:** We check for signs of oral cancer at every comprehensive examination — early detection significantly improves outcomes - **Gum disease monitoring:** Probing, charting, and tracking gum health over time, with early intervention when signs of disease appear - **Fissure seals and fluoride:** Proven preventive measures, particularly for children and patients at high decay risk - **Patient education:** Empowering you with knowledge about your oral health so you can make informed decisions and maintain effective home care - **Lifestyle counselling:** Gentle, non-judgemental conversations about habits that affect oral health — smoking, alcohol, diet, grinding, and stress

How Core Dental Integrates Wellness into Routine Care

You don't need to book a special "wellness appointment" to benefit from this approach. Wellness and longevity thinking is integrated into every patient interaction:

- **Comprehensive health history:** We ask about your overall health, not just your teeth. Medical conditions, medications, allergies, stress levels, and sleep quality all inform your dental care. - **Blood pressure screening:** We may check your blood pressure as part of your visit. High blood pressure is common, often undiagnosed, and relevant to both dental treatment planning and your overall health. - **Screening conversations:** If we notice signs that suggest an underlying health issue — grinding patterns suggesting sleep apnoea, gum disease patterns suggesting undiagnosed diabetes, or oral lesions requiring investigation — we'll raise it with you and suggest appropriate follow-up. - **Collaborative care:** We communicate with your GP, medical specialists, and other health professionals as needed to ensure your dental care is coordinated with your broader health management. - **Long-term relationship:** Wellness dentistry works best over time. As we get to know you, your health history, and your goals, we can provide increasingly personalised and proactive care.

Evidence-Based, Not Alternative

It's important to distinguish wellness dentistry from unproven "alternative" or "biological" dental practices that may reject evidence-based treatments or make unsubstantiated health claims.

At Core Dental:

- **Every treatment recommendation is evidence-based.** We follow guidelines from the Australian Dental Association, the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons, and peer-reviewed scientific literature. - **We don't reject proven treatments.** Fluoride, root canal treatment, dental X-rays, and other established interventions remain cornerstones of our practice. We use them because the evidence supports their safety and effectiveness. - **We don't make unsubstantiated claims.** Where the science is strong (e.g., the gum disease–diabetes connection), we communicate it confidently. Where research is emerging or preliminary, we present it honestly and without exaggeration. - **Patient choice is respected.** If you have preferences about materials, treatments, or approaches, we'll discuss them openly and work with you to find solutions that meet both your preferences and sound clinical principles.

Wellness and longevity dentistry, as we practise it, is simply good dentistry done thoughtfully — with an awareness that your mouth is part of your body, and your dental health is part of your overall health.

Your Dental Health Is a Long-Term Investment

The decisions you make about your dental care today affect your quality of life for decades to come. Healthy teeth and gums support comfortable eating, clear speech, confident smiling, restful sleep, and — as the evidence increasingly shows — better health outcomes across your whole body.

Wellness and longevity dentistry at Core Dental Group is our commitment to helping you maintain optimal oral health as part of a healthy, active, fulfilling life — not just today, but for the long term.

Experience Wellness Dentistry at Core Dental

Wellness and longevity dentistry is available across all nine Core Dental locations. Whether you're booking a routine check-up, managing a complex dental condition, or simply curious about the oral-systemic health connection, we welcome the conversation.

****Find your nearest Core Dental location and book an appointment today.****

Your mouth. Your health. Your future.