

The Focal Theory of Infection postulates a focus of infection can cause a disease in another location of the body. Of the oral foci, pulpless teeth and periodontitis are commonly cited sources; viridans group streptococci (VGS) are ascribed as the principal metastatic culprit. In the past, this unproven theory resulted in many unnecessary extractions. Recently interest has sprung in a potential link between oral conditions and systemic health. However, the oral-systemic linkage concept is unproven. Below are some points to consider:

- Purported associations between oral microorganisms and various diseases require data supporting both incidence and prevalence. Oral infections are rarely accompanied by a secondary disease in other organs.
- Secondary infections are not found to heal after the removal/cure of an oral infection.
- Research demonstrates obligate anaerobes do not survive well in other locations of the body and VGS are not primary pathogens but require a locally compromised tissue to produce their suppurative effects.
- The risk of bacteraemia is 1,000 to 8,000 times more likely from normal daily living than dental treatment. The link between dental treatment with either endocarditis or brain abscesses is not supported by the research.
- No oral microorganism has been found to be the cause of a prosthetic joint infection.
- Spontaneous bacteraemia from infected root canals or periodontal abscesses has not been demonstrated.
- The inoculum effect, a certain threshold of bacteria is necessary to produce an infection. The presence of bacteria does not equate infection.
- Focal infections have only been found to be responsible for sporadic infections and possibly rare autoimmune disorders.
- Focal infections are rare.

Currently there is not enough evidence to suggest dental treatment will reduce the risk of myocardial infection, low birth weights, stroke or other medical problems. Dental treatment should be based its own undisputed benefits. To overstate the benefits of the work we love to perform is to disservice to both the dental profession and our patients.

Regards,



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8am to 5pm - Monday to Saturday  
Extended hours are also available

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If you have any questions about this or other newsletters please contact our office.