

## Gum disease may increase stomach ulcer risk, investigators say.

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(3/31, Cowen) reported, "People with gum disease may face an increased risk of stomach ulcers because they are more likely to harbor the ulcer-causing bacterium *Helicobacter pylori* than those with good oral health," say researchers in Saudi Arabia. Before reaching that conclusion, the team "[studied](#) 101 patients with indigestion, around half of whom had gum disease." After analyzing "dental plaque samples" and the results of "gastrointestinal examinations and tests for the presence of *Helicobacter pylori*," investigators found that "overall, 65 percent of patients had evidence of *Helicobacter pylori* in their dental plaque, and around 50 percent showed evidence of infection with the bacterium in their stomachs." Yet, "significantly more patients with gum disease (79 percent) had *Helicobacter pylori* in their dental plaque than those without the condition (43 percent)." Notably, the bacterium "was significantly more common in the stomachs of patients with gum disease than in those of patients without the condition."