



## 5 Reasons Why If You See Only 1 Doctor, Make It Your Dentist

### 1) Because tooth decay & gum disease are the most reported diseases in the U.S.

They're second only to the common cold. Also:

- 40% of children will have tooth decay by the time they're in kindergarten; cavities are 5 times more common than asthma and 7 times more common than hay fever.
- Nearly 50% of Americans [have some type of periodontal disease](#).
- For adolescents 12 to 19 years, 58% had dental caries, and for adults 20 and over, it's 90%.

While tooth decay is an entirely preventable, when left untreated, conditions can become catastrophic.

### 2) Because your dentist is more likely to spot early signs of diseases

[Dentists are most likely to be early referrers for cancer](#). If you're on a regular oral health program of two cleanings and examinations a year – as LIBERTY recommends – your dentist is likely to be the doctor you'll see most. Between your dentist, hygienist, and dental assistant, they'll be able to spot early signs of a variety of potential problems affecting not just oral health, but the whole body. In many cases, a dentist can detect early signs of potential problems before they may become bigger ones. From 2003 to 2019, [cases of oral cavity and pharynx cancer](#) were on the rise. Coincidentally, so were survival rates – proof that early detection makes a difference.

Up to 75% of oral cancer cases may be attributed to tobacco and drug use and [3/4 of all cases occur in men](#).

Other things your dentist will most likely see first:

- A weakening of the immune system, vitamin deficiencies, stress, mental health issues, eating disorders, poor diet – including overconsumption of soda, hormonal changes, substance abuse, complications of diabetes, and others.
- By checking for soreness in your jaw, swelling in the lymph nodes – a possible sign of HIV – they can see signs of heart disease, mononucleosis, and immune system disorders like lupus or rheumatoid arthritis.
- Bad breath may be poor hygiene, or: digestive issues, kidney problems, bacterial infections, or even cancer. Certain mouth bacteria can be pulled into lungs, causing pneumonia and other respiratory diseases.
- Gums can reveal anemia, sores or lesions may show celiac disease, and your tongue can display oral thrush and even STDs like HPV and syphilis.
- Poor saliva flow can result from taking drugs and medications, autoimmune issues, infections, ageing, and radiation treatments. Your dentist will see signs of Dry Mouth that can stress oral health.

### 3) Because your mouth is important, therefore, so is your dentist

How important? Poor oral health can overpower even your intestines: [Your intestine](#) is the largest and most important immune organ in the body and provides important bodily defenses. With poor oral hygiene, your mouth can produce periodontal pathogens (tiny disease-causing organisms) so powerfully toxic and acid resistant, even your waste-handling intestines can't defend themselves. These pathogens can also aggravate the liver, the cardiovascular system, diabetes, arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, and more.

### 4) Because periodontal disease – serious gum disease – can be a killer

[Periodontal disease](#) refers to infection and inflammation of the gums, ligaments, and bone that surround teeth. Left untreated, it can spread below the gumline, cause gums to recede and pull away from the tooth and form pockets for bacteria to collect. Eventually, this can destroy gums and cause teeth to loosen and die.

Periodontitis has also been known to have long-term effects on heart health, also linked to endocarditis (an infection of heart valves), HIV/AIDS, Alzheimer's and dementia, and osteoporosis. It disables the body's ability to fight infection. In pregnancy, it can lower immunity and lead to complications including premature birth and low birth weight.

### 5) Because you can keep your teeth for a lifetime

Once, losing teeth in your old age was a given. Today, the numbers of older [people keeping their natural teeth has steadily increased](#) through better dental habits and in the reduction of tobacco and alcohol consumption.

However, [this positive trend may be under threat](#): 30% of Millennials surveyed claimed to brush their teeth only once a day, and on average have gone more than two days without brushing their teeth once.

In conclusion: Your dentist can't do it all alone. Your best overall health begins with the mouth.