

What Your Saliva Tells the Dentist

Happy mouth, happy life - is that the phrase? If not, it should be. Saliva, of which we produce up to two gallons of daily, is actually a phenomenal tool to measure overall bodily health. Up to 90% of systemic diseases have oral symptoms, so frequent trips to your dentist can help you to catch any upcoming health issues.

Understanding Your Saliva

Saliva neutralizes acids in your mouth, protecting you against dental decay (such as cavities or other tooth decay) and gum disease. But saliva can tell your dentist so much more about your health!

Dry mouth, a condition in which you have reduced saliva, can be caused by medication. While some recommendations for dry mouth say that it can be fixed through rehydrating, dry mouth can actually cause many problems if unchecked: periodontal disease, swelling, and bad breath. However, testing surrounding dry mouth can help your dentist discover if you are suffering from any other diseases, such as HIV, or using illegal drugs. In fact, saliva is crucial in rapid HIV testing.

Saliva testing can also help dentists catch, diagnose, and treat other illnesses. Checking cortisol levels can test stress responses in babies, while bone-specific proteins can monitor bone loss. High glucose levels can point to an uncontrolled case of diabetes, whereas white or off-white saliva may indicate some sort of oral infection. A dentist may also check your pH levels if you think you have acid reflux, signaled by a bitter tasting saliva.

A Changing Field

According to a 2007 article in the Academy of General Dentistry's journal, changes in saliva analyzation can also give dentists insight into breast cancer. Researchers found that analyzing and studying saliva can help with early cancer diagnosis.

Good oral care is important to staying healthy, and your saliva helps your dentist figure out if anything else is going on. Protect your health by [scheduling your next dental exam](#) at Goldstein Dental Group's Novi location.