

# Link between periodontitis and cardiovascular disease in individuals with rheumatoid arthritis

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Rates of both periodontal disease and cardiovascular disease are elevated in individuals with rheumatoid arthritis. New research published in *Arthritis & Rheumatology* suggests that immune responses to certain bacteria that cause periodontal disease may play a role in patients' higher cardiovascular disease risk.

Among 197 patients with [rheumatoid arthritis](#), those with antibody responses to common periodontal pathogens were more likely to also show signs of atherosclerosis.

"Evidence of exposure to a particular periodontal pathogen called *Aggregatibacter actinomycetemcomitans* had the strongest associations with atherosclerosis in the patients with rheumatoid arthritis that we studied," said lead author Jon T. Giles, MD MPH, of Columbia University. "Moreover, it was associated with measures of coronary, carotid, and peripheral atherosclerosis, over and above other risk factors for atherosclerosis. Further studies are needed to determine if eliminating exposure to this pathogen might modify the increase in [cardiovascular disease](#) known to be part of rheumatoid arthritis."

**More information:** Jon T Giles et al, Associations of Antibodies Targeting Periodontal Pathogens with Subclinical Coronary, Carotid, and Peripheral Arterial Atherosclerosis in Rheumatoid Arthritis, *Arthritis & Rheumatology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1002/art.41572](https://doi.org/10.1002/art.41572)

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