

Achieve

A Newsletter
for AvMed
Members

▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH HEART FAILURE

Why staying on top of dental care can help your heart

AvMed Medical Director Joby Kolsun shares his insight on the importance of oral health.

By Joby Kolsun, D.O.

Oral care is often overlooked as a part of chronic disease management. But your dentist is an important part of your care team.

A growing body of research is finding links between oral health and physical health. Your mouth is home to billions of bacteria, some good and some bad. A healthy mouth can fight off the bad bacteria. But when you have gum disease, an infection, or another problem in your mouth, you're less able to fight off those germs.

This can be bad news for your heart health. The bacteria in your mouth can cause infections and inflammation in other parts of your body. And it can increase your risk of heart disease, clogged arteries, and even stroke.

If you have one or more chronic conditions, dentist visits are even more important. Regular cleanings will help keep your teeth and gums

healthy. And your dentist can check for early signs of gum disease or other problems that could make your condition worse.

Oral health checklist

- Brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes.
- Floss every day.
- Visit the dentist twice a year for a cleaning and exam.
- Cut back on sugary foods and drinks.



▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH HEART FAILURE



How to manage your health if you have diabetes and congestive heart failure

If you've been diagnosed with both congestive heart failure (CHF) and diabetes, you're far from alone. In fact, one study found that more than 40% of people hospitalized with heart failure also have type 2 diabetes.

Because the conditions are so closely related and can affect quality of life, it's important to treat them together instead of seeing them as separate diseases that don't affect each other. With that approach in mind, consider these tips for managing both conditions.

Set meaningful goals

Think about what's important for your quality of life. For instance, both heart failure and diabetes can cause fatigue, so one goal might be to walk every day without feeling exhausted. These goals can give you a sense of progress and accomplishment.

Review your meds

Multiple chronic conditions often mean multiple

medications. It's a good idea to review what you're taking with both your cardiologist and your endocrinologist to see if there are meds that can help both diseases.

Consider your plate

What you eat and drink can have a big impact on both conditions. In addition to watching your carb intake, a low-salt diet is critical for managing CHF. Reducing your sodium intake can help reduce fluid buildup around your heart, lungs, feet, and lower legs.

Focus on self-care

Dealing with multiple conditions can be a struggle. It's important to find ways to care for your mental health too. That includes getting enough sleep, managing stress, socializing, and doing activities that bring you joy. If you're struggling, consider working with a therapist.

We're here for you

Your Case Manager can connect you to the resources you need. Just call **1-833-609-0735**.



Healthy Eating Made Simple

Elizabeth Ferrer, R.D., AvMed's Registered Dietitian, shares her favorite tips for happier, healthier meals — without feeling deprived.

Stay on track this holiday season

The holidays are all about enjoying friends, family ... and delicious food! But if you're managing a health condition or have dietary restrictions, the buffet table may feel more like a minefield. Still, you can indulge in seasonal favorites without sacrificing your health. Here are a few tips.

Avoid mindless grazing

People tend to gather around the food at parties. But when you're chatting, you may not even realize how much you're eating. Cut down on mindless eating by moving conversations away from the snacks.

Be smart about sweets

Sweets aren't off the table,

but be mindful of how much you have. If there are several things you want to try, have just one or two bites of a few



different things (maybe find a friend to split portions with). Or, if you have your eye on something special, have a whole portion of just that.

Bring your own dish

If you have specific dietary restrictions, bring your own dish that meets your

needs. The host and the rest of the party will appreciate an extra dish, and you know there will be at least one thing there that you can eat without worry. (Looking for ideas? Try the recipe on the next page. It's a lighter version of a sweet potato casserole.)

Go easy on the drinks

Alcoholic (or non-alcoholic) drinks can be loaded with calories and sugar, on top of all the other treats

you're enjoying. Choose low-calorie options like light beer or wine or use sugar-free mixers like seltzer or diet soda. And stick to just one or two drinks.

Don't come hungry

It's tempting to "save your calories" by skipping meals or eating light before going to a party. But if you're overly hungry when you get to the party, you're more likely to overeat. And it will be harder to resist cravings for salt, sugar, and fat.

Recipe



Roasted Sweet Potato with cinnamon almond butter sauce

Serves: 4 | Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

2 large sweet potatoes, cut into small cubes
2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
½ tsp. garlic powder
¼ tsp. salt
2 Tbsp. natural creamy almond butter
1 Tbsp. warm water
1 tsp. cinnamon powder

Nutrition facts (per serving):

Calories: 190 calories | Fat: 11 g (saturated fat: 1 g) |
Cholesterol: 0 mg | Sodium: 180 mg | Carbs: 20 g | Fiber: 4 g |
Sugar: 6 g (added sugar: 0 g) | Protein: 4 g

Directions

Preheat oven to 425° F.
Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Add the sweet potatoes and toss with olive oil, garlic powder, and salt. Bake for 15 minutes, stir, and return to the oven for 15 minutes.

While the potatoes are roasting, make the sauce: Add the almond butter and water to a small bowl and microwave for 10-15 seconds. Mix in the cinnamon powder. If needed, add more warm water a teaspoon at a time until it's thin enough to drizzle. Drizzle sauce over roasted sweet potatoes and serve.