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September 2, 2009 | [dentalproductsreport.com](#)
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New study to probe link between dental health and memory loss

Information provided by: [DentalPlans.com](#)

A research team at West Virginia University recently received funding to continue studies into whether gum disease is connected to poor memory in old age.

The institution received \$1.3 million from the National Institutes of Health to carry out its work and eventually present guidelines for everyone to improve dental health. As part of the study, scientists will examine detailed records from thousands of American patients over an extended period of time in order to see the exact connections between [oral health](#) and memory.

According to the American Dental Association, people increase their risk of periodontal disease if they smoke, chew tobacco, have crooked teeth or take certain medications. Bleeding red gums are one warning sign and those who experience similar symptoms should schedule a [dental checkup](#) as soon as possible.

Gum disease expert Dr Richard Crout explains the study is not intended to frighten people but to give them answers. "With rates of Alzheimer's skyrocketing, imagine the benefits of knowing that keeping the mouth free of infection could cut down on cases of dementia," he says.

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