

Why are Cardiologists so Concerned About Inflammation?

"Inflammation is the central factor in cardiovascular disease, by far the world's biggest killer."

What is Inflammation?

Inflammation is the red flag your body puts up saying, "I'm in trouble."

Your body is like a gladiator in a coliseum being attacked on all sides by your enemies (*harmful germs, bacteria and viruses*). If the battle becomes heated, your body reacts with redness, swelling and even pain. This is inflammation.

The following are examples of inflammation:

- **Red Skin Around a Cut** - You have a cut permitting bacteria to get under your skin. Your body has trouble fighting this invasion of harmful bacteria and becomes red, puffy and painful.
- **Cough & Runny Nose** - Your resistance is low (immune system is fighting poorly) and infectious bacteria gets into your lungs and sinus. The result in a bad cold.
- **Tender & Bleeding Gums** - You have a chronic infection in your gums (periodontal disease) which causes your gums to bleed when brushing or flossing. Your gums can thus become tender, sore or painful.
- **Infection in the Blood Stream** - When gum infection (periodontal disease) gets into your jawbone, harmful bacteria gets into your bloodstream. Each time you chew, infection gets into your blood which causes inflammation in the blood vessels.

Through modern living, everyone builds up plaque on their blood vessel walls. The trouble comes when a piece of plaque breaks off. It can then clog a blood vessel and lead to heart attack and stroke.

It is like a drainpipe. There may be large deposits on the pipe walls, but it works fine until the time when a piece gets stuck. Then the flow stops.

Researchers are finding that inflammation on the blood vessel wall can loosen plaque, making it more likely to break free.

Periodontal disease is one way inflammation enters the bloodstream. Many believe this is why patients with untreated periodontal disease are about three times more likely to have a heart attack or stroke!