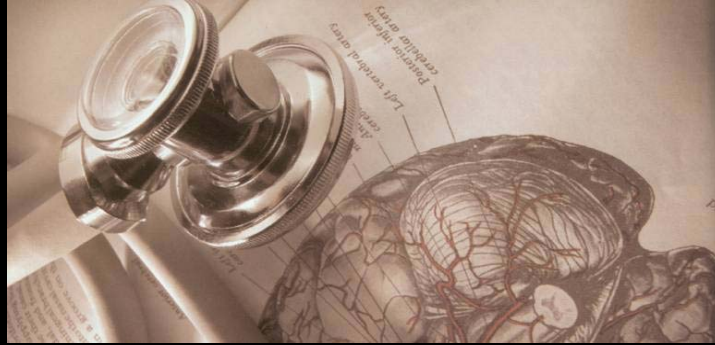


# The Inflammation Connection



## The New Factor in Heart Disease, Stroke, Cancer, and Other Serious Diseases.

By Marcus Gitterle, MD

One of the early signs of gum disease is that your gums turn from a pretty pink to an inflamed red. Scientists are now discovering that bodily inflammation is linked with a host of diseases including heart disease, stroke, lung disease, cancers, Alzheimer's, and others.

Gum disease is an inflammatory condition that does not go away without treatment and it is a major cause of inflammation in many people (8) (22). Inflammation causes the liver to secrete a protein called C-Reactive Protein (CRP, for short) to fight the problem, which seems to cause a number of side effects in the body.

The best-known side effect of elevated CRP levels is the connection to heart disease. CRP is more predictive of heart attacks than the bad LDL cholesterol (9) (23). While a CRP value of under 1 mg/liter is considered normal, a value of 2-3 triples your risk of heart attack and higher values can increase your risk up to seven and a half times! (under 1.0 mg/liter). The actual manner by which CRP causes heart attacks was only recently explained. Elevated CRP levels actually interfere with the process that prevents blood clots, thus causing a higher incidence of blockages in arteries, which can result in a sudden heart attack or stroke (10).

**“Gum disease is the major cause of inflammation in many people.”**

By comparison, bad cholesterol slowly builds up plaque in the arteries which often allows for some advanced warning in the form of pain or weakness. While the active process is less known, statistically people with the top 25% of CRP scores develop 2.5 times as much colon cancer as those in the bottom 25% (11). Also, CRP is implicated in Alzheimer's. Seniors with the highest 1/3 of CRP levels had significantly more cognitive decline than those in the bottom third (12).

Clearly it pays to know your CRP number, which can be requested as a single test (a high-sensitivity CRP is the more valuable test for heart disease association) or when other blood tests are done. If your CRP is high, the causes need to be determined and corrected to reduce your number.

In addition to gum disease, bodily infections such as a urinary tract infection, high blood pressure, smoking, lymphoma, and even being overweight can contribute to elevated CRP levels. Since periodontal disease is an inflammatory disease and is capable of elevating CRP levels, we normally request this blood test for any of our patients diagnosed with periodontal disease. Centers for dental Medicine has developed a groundbreaking protocol for the diagnosis of periodontal disease and the treatment of periodontal disease and its associated negative impact on overall health.

Centers throughout the country have found that by following our unique periodontal protocol, we are able to quickly reduce periodontal inflammation, and in so doing, we can significantly reduce the CRP level to a non-harmful range in almost all cases, unless there is another systemic factor contributing to the elevation (19).

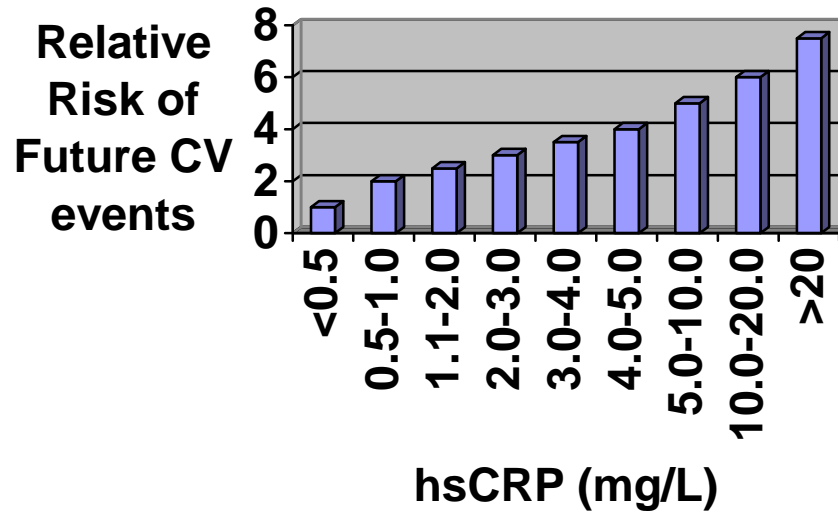
If your CRP number is high to begin with and remains high after periodontal health has been established, we will collaborate with your physician to review and monitor your results and make sure that you do not have other problems as well. As a Center for Dental Medicine, we give you our exclusive commitment to help care for your total health.

***A Safe, Non-Surgical, Non-Toxic Treatment:*** Traditionally, physicians are trained to diagnose disease and treat with surgery or drugs. The discovery of the infection-inflammation and heart disease connection is no different.

Physicians are waiting on drug manufacturers to produce a drug that will lower the levels of CRP and thus, reduce the risk of a heart attack. An eighteen-month clinical trial showed that a statin drug (Lipitor) can lower CRP levels (9). However, to accomplish this, 8 times the normal dosage was needed.

This approach can be expensive and unnecessarily risky. A sole drug-based approach to lowering CRP levels is not seeking and removing the underlying cause of the elevated CRP. A more ideal approach would be find and eliminate the source of the inflammation in the first place. A commitment we make to our patients is to help to eliminate any periodontal inflammation in order to rule out this potential cause.

## Clinical Predictive Value of Very Low as Well as Very High Levels of hsCRP



**The graph shows that depending on your hsCRP score your heart attack risk could be as high as 7.5 times the normal.**