



**May  
National High Blood Pressure  
Awareness Month**



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High blood pressure or hypertension is often called the silent killer and for good reason. Sustained high blood pressure can put too much tension on the blood vessels of the body and lead to heart disease and stroke.

In the last 10 years, much research has been done in the dental field linking gum disease (periodontal disease) with these severe health problems.

Periodontal disease is characterized by the presence of inflammation in the gum tissue and can lead to bone destruction and tooth loss. Likewise, stroke and heart disease are characterized by the same presence of inflammation. This inflammation can be measured with a blood test for the level of C-reactive protein (CRP). This marker is a sensitivity test for inflammation. Dentally, we can measure the amount of inflammation in the mouth with 3 simple markers:

- (1) The amount of plaque present - 90% plaque free is healthy.
- (2) The depth of the pocket - the distance between where you see your gum tissue and where it really attaches to your teeth. 3 mm or less is healthy.
- (3) The amount of bleeding present – 90% bleeding free is healthy.

*To download our  
Healthy & Delicious "Recipe of the Month"  
visit our website at:  
[www.SteelyDDS.com](http://www.SteelyDDS.com) "Our Doctor" page.*

Oral Fitness for Life™ is dedicated to helping you make proactive decisions about your health. Recently, the American Heart Association published the new guidelines for blood pressure:

**GUIDELINES**

120/80 or less	Normal
120/80 - 139/89	Prehypertension
140/90 and higher	Hypertension

**YOUR NUMBERS**

	Normal
	Prehypertension
	Hypertension

While inflammation in the gum tissue (characterized by plaque and bleeding) and hypertension are not causally linked (one causes the other), the same inflammation can play a significant role in folks that have increased risk factors for heart disease and stroke. Lower your risk with an increase in exercise, decrease sodium intake, add whole grains, and knock off those few extra pounds. And remember to control your inflammation by knowing your numbers – your blood pressure numbers and your plaque – pocket – bleeding numbers.

**Take action, be proactive – my team and I invite you to wellness on the journey of Oral Fitness for Life™!**

Sincerely,  
Dr. Robin P. Steely