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COVID-19 and Oral Health Conditions

American Dental Association

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COVID-19 and Oral Health Conditions

CHICAGO, February, 2021 — The American Dental Association (ADA) has been tracking developments of tongue and mouth issues COVID-19 patients experience since early on in the pandemic. Oral health is an important and vital part of overall health, and the ADA is continuing to examine the connection between the two as it relates to COVID-19.

Research published ahead of print in the [Journal of Clinical Periodontology](#) reported that people with COVID-19 who had severe gum disease appeared at greater risk of more severe COVID-19 disease. A different study, in the [British Journal of Dermatology](#) (BJD), reported on skin and tongue abnormalities found in some patients with COVID-19.

According to the American Academy of Oral & Maxillofacial Pathology (AAOMP), the tongue conditions depicted in the BJD article are very common conditions and may be unrelated to COVID-19.

One condition, in which the side of the tongue has scalloped grooves, may be caused by the tongue rubbing against teeth. The other condition, known as “geographic tongue,” appears as red patches with white, tan or yellow-colored borders on the surface of the tongue. Geographic tongue is typically harmless and usually disappears and reappears on its own. However, while such lesions may not be related to COVID-19, ADA researchers note they have received reports from colleagues of similar cases from patients who have had COVID-19.

The ADA, AAOMP and the American Academy of Periodontology agree there is value in additional research of oral health conditions that may be related to COVID-19 and that maintaining good oral hygiene and visiting the dentist regularly contributes to overall wellness.

Patients who may be concerned about their oral health are encouraged to see a dentist for an evaluation and, if needed, referral to a specialist.

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About the American Dental Association

The not-for-profit ADA is the nation's largest dental association, representing more than 161,000 dentist members. The premier source of oral health information, the ADA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1859. The ADA's state-of-the-art research facilities develop and test dental products and materials that have advanced the practice of dentistry and made the patient experience more positive. The ADA Seal of Acceptance long has been a valuable and respected guide to consumer dental care products. The monthly *The Journal of the American Dental Association* (JADA) is the ADA's flagship publication and the best-read scientific journal in dentistry. For more information about the ADA, visit ADA.org. For more information on oral health, including prevention, care and treatment of dental disease, visit the ADA's consumer website MouthHealthy.org.