

AFRICAN PEOPLE'S
EDUCATION AND
DEFENSE FUND,
INC.

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Our Mission

* Develop and institutionalize programs addressing the grave disparities in education, health, healthcare, and economic development faced by the African community.

* Defend the human and civil rights of African people.

Healthy Connections

MAY 2008

Rising Food Costs Likely to Increase Obesity, Diabetes

Some of the most obese people in the US are among the poorest. And with food costs rising, the problem of is likely to get worse.

Food prices in the US are continuing to rise, with the cost of many items double or triple a year ago. Almost 22 percent of African families in the US experience food insecurity — not knowing where their next meal will come from.

“The food crisis will make obesity and attendant diabetes even more rampant,” said Univ. of Washington epidemiologist Adam Drewnowski. “Fruits, vegetables and fish are becoming luxury goods completely out of reach of many people. Consumption of cheap food will only grow. Obesity is the toxic consequence of a failing economy.”

Globally, prices will rise nearly 50%.

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Gum Disease Can be Deadly Pancreatic Cancer, Heart Disease Are Linked

The link between oral health and overall health has been discussed in medical journals for years, but there are several recent studies showing clear links between gum disease (periodontitis) and two major killers: pancreatic cancer and cardiovascular (heart) disease. This underscores the importance of daily brushing, flossing and routine dental care.

Pancreatic Cancer Link

Pancreatic cancer is the fourth leading cause of death from cancer. In a 16 year Harvard study of over 50,000 men, those with a history of gum

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Deadly But Often Preventable Effects of Gum Disease:

- Recently Harvard researchers found a surprising but powerful link between poor gum health and one of the deadliest diseases, pancreatic cancer.
- Howard Univ. researchers have now analyzed studies to show that people with gum disease are more likely to develop potentially lethal cardiovascular (heart) disease and artery plaque.
- Not long ago a 12 year old in Maryland died as a result of complications from a tooth abscess.

Food Costs Increase Obesity

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fueled by Wall Street speculation, diversion of grains to make biofuels, forced deregulation of world agricultural markets, and US Agribusiness profits.

While more people from every economic background are becoming obese around the world, the poor are still outpacing the better-off.

A recent US Dept. Health and Human Services study found that women in poverty were roughly 50 percent more likely to be obese than those with higher socioeconomic status. In households with \$50,000+ annual income, 17 percent are obese.

A Univ. of Pennsylvania study found that poor 15 to 17 year olds were 50 percent more likely to carry excessive poundage than more affluent teens.

Also, poor people frequently are in “food deserts” — neighborhoods with few supermarkets; they rely on corner stores and convenience marts for groceries.

Concentrating on filling their stomachs, poor, hungry people go for high-fat, high-sugar foods. “they’re not thinking about health — just getting through the day,” said a hunger expert at Drexel U. School of Public Health.

This is why the All People’s TyRon Lewis Community Gym is so important. Statistics correlate the close proximity of a fitness gym with less obesity and improved overall health.

The nonprofit African People’s Education and Defense Fund established the All People’s TyRon Lewis Community Gym and Wellness Center in 2001 to

empower the African community to improve individual and collective health. We give our community access to exercise and information and support for proper nutrition and lifestyle — right in the neighborhood.

We can stop this trend of obesity which cuts short the lives of African people and affects us all! Join the gym. Join the APEDF Wellness Committee to help promote the gym and healthy lifestyles, and hold workshops on healthy shopping and cooking, gardening to grow our own fruits and vegetables or raise fish. We can lower food costs and insure our future by networking with food growers and distributors and start food buying clubs and coops. Call APEDF at 727-821-2437 to get involved!

Sources: *Philadelphia Inquirer*; “*World Food Crisis and Starvation*” www.uhurusolidarity.blogspot.com

“Obesity is a toxic consequence of a failing economy...”

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Gum Disease Can Be Deadly, Continued From Page 3

The root and surface of the tooth remain, and the cavity that is created is filled. A crown may be placed over the tooth.

Treatment for Gum Disease

Treatment for gum disease can include an oral antibiotic or anti-biotic gel applied directly into the diseased pocket between the tooth and gum. A common treatment is “scaling and root planning,” an intensive teeth cleaning above and below the gum line that often requires local

anaesthesia. For advanced cases, doctors will cut away the diseased gum tissue.

One problem is that many people do not have dental insurance or have limited coverage and don’t seek regular dental care. However more preventative services are becoming available, especially for those at high risk such as pregnant women or diabetes patients.

Sources: *Wall Street Journal*, *American Academy of Periodontology* www.perio.org, *Washington Post*, www.nih.gov/medlineplus

Gum Disease Can be Deadly

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disease were at 64 percent higher risk for pancreatic cancer, compared with those with healthy mouths. The comparison was drawn after adjusting the results for age, smoking, diabetes, body mass index and other factors.

The study is the latest in a series of reports showing that the health of your mouth, teeth and gums may have a powerful impact on your overall health. Gum disease is linked with heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and pregnancy problems.

A person suffering from gum disease has a mouth teeming with bacteria found in plaque, the sticky film that forms on teeth. These bacteria not only cause gums to become inflamed, but they can also invade other parts of the body, including cells in coronary arteries.

It may be that chronic infection in the gums triggers inflammation throughout the body, which can fuel the growth of cancer. Or it may be that oral bacteria trigger a chemical process in the body that results in high levels of nitrosamines, cancer-causing compounds that also are in tobacco smoke.

“People think of gum disease as being in their mouth,” says Dominique Michaud, the study’s lead author and an assistant professor at the Harvard School of Public Health. “But when it gets severe, it’s not just in the mouth. It’s probably in the entire body.”

“Most convincing was our finding that people who had gum disease but had never smoked has a two-fold increase in risk of pancreatic cancer,” she said. This would confirm previous studies identifying smoking as a high-risk factor for developing pancreatic cancer.

It is estimated that at least 35 percent of adults have some sort of gum disease, and about one-third of those have a moderate to severe form.

Brushing and flossing do not always prevent gum disease. About one-third of the population may have a genetic predisposition to the problem. Certain medications, including oral contraceptives, heart medicines, and anti-depressants can also affect oral health.

The Link to Heart Disease

Each year, cardiovascular disease kills more Americans than cancer. And while most people are aware that lifestyle choices such as eating right, getting enough exercise and quitting smoking can help prevent cardiovascular disease, they may not know that by just brushing and flossing their teeth each day, they might also be avoiding this potentially lethal condition. There have been many studies associating gum disease with heart disease. The findings of new analysis of previously published studies by Howard University researchers suggest that the long-term effect of chronic periodontitis (gum disease), such as extended bacterial exposure, may be what ultimately leads to cardiovascular disease.

They found that individuals with periodontal disease whose showed increased bacterial exposure were more likely to develop coronary heart disease or atherosclerosis (plaque formation in the arteries).

With the number of people with heart disease continuing to increase, it is important to understand that simple activities like brushing and flossing twice a day, and regular visits to your dental professional can help lower your risk of other health conditions.

Danger of Tooth Abscesses

Recently a 12 year old boy in Maryland died of complications from a tooth abscess, a kind of infection particularly common among people who do not have routine dental care.

A dental abscess or tooth infection is a collection of infected material (pus) resulting from bacterial infection of the center (pulp) of a tooth.

An abscess is a complication of decay but may also result when a tooth is broken or chipped. Openings in the tooth enamel allow bacteria to infect the pulp.

Treatment can include antibiotics, warm saltwater rinses and over-the-counter pain relievers. To preserve the tooth, a dentist may perform a root canal, removing the center of the tooth, including the nerve and tissue.

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