

Simple oral hygiene could help reduce severe COVID-19 – study

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Simple oral hygiene measures could help lower the risk of transmission of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) from the mouth to the lungs, a study found.

The research, published in the Journal of Oral Medicine and Dental Research on April 20, revealed that COVID-19 patients with gum disease were 3.5 times more likely to be admitted to the intensive care unit, 4.5 times more likely need a ventilator, and 8.8 times more likely to die than those without gum disease.

To conduct the study, researchers followed 568 patients with COVID19.

The researchers said dental plaque accumulation and periodontal inflammation further intensify the chance of SARS-CoV-2 virus reaching the lungs, causing more severe cases of the infection.

"[Daily] oral hygiene and oral healthcare should be prioritized as such measures could be potentially lifesaving for COVID-19 patients," the study read.

The authors noted that simple low-cost measures, such as use of mouthwash could "decrease the salivary viral load" and help prevent or mitigate the development of lung disease and severe COVID-19.

The research team is comprised of experts from the Salisbury District Hospital, United Kingdom; Mouth-Body Research Institute, United States; Mouth-Body Research Institute, South Africa; and The University of Birmingham, United Kingdom.