Eye on Oral Microbiome 101: What it Reveals About Your Overall Health Transcript

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Introduction to Oral Health and the Gut

So we hear that health starts in the gut, and I 100% believe that health starts in the gut. But now what I know is that the gut starts in the mouth. You know, it's one long tube north to south and, you know, top to bottom.

I say, if I hold it, you know what? It's all, it all matters. And now we can, with DNA testing, literally prove how these oral bacteria move to other parts of the body.

So now I do salivary testing on my patients, but I also do a stool test. I use a GI map to see what's going on in the gut because so many of these oral bacteria have actually translocated to the gut.

Welcome to the IQ Podcast. I'm Dr. Ronni Banek, here to help you boost your IQ with powerful insights that connect your eyes, your brain, and your whole body wellness.

Hello, everyone, and welcome to another episode on the IQ Podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Ronni Banek, and in this podcast, you gain insights into your vision health, brain health, and overall wellness to help you raise your IQ.

Today, I am so excited to bring on a guest who has a very unique area of expertise, something that doesn't get talked about that often, but should, which is our oral health.

So I'm so excited to welcome Dr. Debbie Osment to the IQ Podcast. Welcome, Dr. Debbie. Thank you, Dr. Rani. It is a pure joy to be here with you. Oh, absolutely.

And it's our honor to have you on. So let me just introduce you to our audience a little bit. Dr. Debbie is a graduate of Oklahoma University College of Dentistry.

And she served as adjunct faculty there for seven years. She completed a master's in metabolic and nutritional medicine from the University of South Florida, Morsani College of Medicine.

And she's also a diplomat with the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine. Dr. Osment has trained at Mayo Clinic and she's a nationally board certified health and wellness coach.

Dr. Debbie is the host of the Vitality Made Simple podcast in which she is committed to sharing practical, understandable, and fun strategies to enhance your vitality and health span.

Dr. Osman is committed to early diagnosis and intervention of periodontal disease to help positively affect not only the mouth, but the entire body. So Dr.

Debbie, we have a lot in common because I'm sure When you compare yourself to your colleagues, they're mainly looking inside the mouth, but you're not just looking inside the mouth.

You're looking at the whole person. And I do the same when it comes to eye health. But tell us, share your journey into how you developed this more holistic view of oral health and how you became a wellness coach.

Well, thank you for asking.

Dr. Debbie Osmentu2019s Holistic Dental Journey

I've been in practice for 40 years and have had sort of a quirky little practice, a boutique kind of practice where I

knew everybody and really enjoy people.

And I started noticing that the med lists were getting longer and longer. People who were trying to be healthy were you know, taking it at 60 taking three or four meds and then adding to their doctors they were going to and not feeling better.

I would see these people who save their money for a fun retirement, but they would spend all their time, you know, dealing with these chronic inflammatory illnesses that were new.

And Dr. Ronnie, when I was in dental school, autoimmunity was virtually non-existent. We talked very slightly about lupus, but it was very rare. And of course now, as you know, and all of your astute listeners know, you know, it's just rampant.

So I saw that climb starting to happen. A very big moment happened to me about 25 years ago. when a long-term patient, a person who had been my patient since literally day one of my practice, she always had just a lot of inflammation in her mouth and she was one of these people that was very careful about her home care.

She would do anything she was supposed to do. You know, you could tell her to stand on her head and she would do anything. And she never looked better.

And I always tell her there's something else going on. We've got to figure out what this is. Well, she came in and she looked fabulous. Her tissue was healthy.

She was feeling better. She had a more radiance about her. And I said, What are you doing differently? And she said nothing. And I said, Oh, no, no, you're doing something.

We've got to figure it out. And so, you know, I asked every question I could think of Dr. Ronnie and finally she left and I said, when you figure this out, call me.

So she went out to her car. We saw her coming back in and she said, well, I'm getting a vitamin D injection, you know, once a month, could that be changing anything?

Well, now this would have been literally 25 years ago. So vitamin D was not as much on our radar. And I said, well, let's, I'm going to figure it out.

So sure enough, that sort of started, you know, my quest to learn more and connect the docs. Also, our son was, had a lot of chronic illnesses when he was.

young so you know that sort of also always sparks everything so so that it sort of happened innocently it was it's not been a grand plan and through all the education that she mentioned it's just like well how about this how about this it was I never at any point said okay here's what I'm gonna do and here's how I'm gonna do it it just sort of unfolded.

Yeah, well, I love how, yes, you stumbled upon it, but you stumbled upon it because you were so observant. Like, you noticed that there was a change in this woman's oral health, and you decided to investigate.

I think a lot of providers out there would just feel like, oh, you're doing great. See you in six months. Good luck. But you really wanted to find out, you know, what was it that this woman was doing that changed around the trajectory of her health?

That's really incredible. Very powerful. What was so interesting, Dr. Ronnie, is that it wasn't just her mouth. It was her whole radiance. She seemed more energetic.

She was a very high official here in Oklahoma and worked a lot. Didn't spend time outside. You know, things that we know now are so important, very metroworkaholic, but her whole countenance changed.

Well, it's incredible to see that type of change with the proper support, mainly nutrition, but so many other aspects of our health that we can support.

Now, Dr. Debbie, you are an integrative dentist or functional medicine dentist. Now, I know that as part of your work, you do a lot of things related to holistic health, but one thing I wanted to really pick your brain about is the oral microbiome.

Many of our listeners have heard about the gut microbiome. That usually gets the biggest kind of spotlight. There's also a skin microbiome. There's a brain microbiome.

There's an eye microbiome. There are many different types of microbiomes. When did you first come across the oral microbiome? Was it like an aha moment for you or something you kind of knew about that you realized, oh, this is something really important?

Tell us that story. It happened in 2010. And I remember the moment that I opened an envelope. So it wasn't an email. It was an envelope advertising a vascular inflammation class.

a big three-day seminar in Las Vegas. But nevertheless, it was given by some cardiologists, and they were introducing a salivary diagnostics test. So they were introducing a saliva test that would tell you different bacteria and how they impacted stroke and heart attack prevention.

This class was specifically stroke and heart attack prevention. So we talked in school about different bugs in the mouth, but mostly in terms of decay.

not really in terms of systemic health, but I was starting to see all these things that, you know, I'd already learned, you know, based on curiosity with a patient that you can almost diagnose type 2 diabetes in the mouth, at least early, just a whole lot of these correlations.

And of course, we couldn't put causation with it. Now we can put a lot of causation with it. But I went to this class and came home and just started testing anybody who had spit in the vial for me.

So started getting a lot of, you know, information, Dr. Ronnie about, okay, this person has this bacterial profile, and they have, you know, this problem they have, you know, just on and on.

But I guess the big, that was the big moment. But then I started seeing a lot of people with gut problems. So we hear that health starts in the gut. And I 100% believe that health starts in the gut.

But now what I know is that the gut starts in the mouth. You know, it's one long tube north to south and, you know, top to bottom. I say, if I hold it, you know what?

It's all, it all matters. And now we can, with DNA testing, literally prove how these oral bacteria move to other parts of the body.

Discovering the Oral Microbiome

So now I do salivary testing on my patients, but I also do a stool test. I use a GI map to see what's going on in the gut because so many of these oral bacteria have actually translocated to the gut they're you know causing causing problems of course their inflammatory mediators travel throughout the body but also we can find the dna of oral pathogens in the brain in the fallopian tubes it would be interesting in the eyes we're gonna have to i did some research before coming on your podcast so just about glaucoma and Yes, there is some exciting work about that, yes.

And so stay tuned, all of you, where it's not quite ready for the press yet, but the oral microbiome and the potential link to glaucoma. So we'll talk about that maybe on a future podcast, Dr.

Devi. But since you mentioned the gut, you mentioned how our health is really so based on what's going on in our gut microbiome. How may that affect the gut microbiome and the oral microbiome?

I should say that it's all one. How may that affect brain health, cognition, neuroinflammation? Like, what are some thoughts you have about that? Or can you give some examples?

Yes, absolutely. Well, you know, we know about the gut brain axis. And now we even know that there's an oral brain axis. So so that, you know, it's a gut brain oral axis, and they all affect each other.

And then even, you know, one step away, they affect each other. It's a very big circle. Dr. Dale Bredesen was on my podcast and we talked about specifically a bacteria called porphyromonas gingivalis that gets, has had a lot of research.

Porphyromonas gingivalis in 2012 really came to popularity in terms of brain health because there was a study where it was found in, I think it was 40% postmortem of people, brains of people with Alzheimer's disease and zero.

Wow, 40%. And I could be, it could be 37 or, you know, Do you know how common is it in people without Alzheimer's, like let's say a healthy person who is age matched to someone with Alzheimer's?

Oh, that is a fantastic question. I don't see it very often in people who are cognitively healthy at 80, but I do consistently see it in people who are having cognitive problems.

There is a cardiologist nearby in Oklahoma City who is recode certified, that's Dr. Del Bredesen's program. So I've got this cardiologist is now doing saliva testing.

So we have a lot of good data. And typically those patients come and see me and I get their oral microbiome, you know, cleaned up and healthy and balanced.

Wow. So can I ask you then, if you identify this particular pathologic bacterium in the mouth and you decide to treat it, do you eradicate it? Do you support the other bacteria to reduce its numbers?

And then the second part of the question is, have you seen any changes in an individual's trajectory with their cognition? Do they stabilize? Do they get better?

What happens? Oh, that's just such a great question. Yes, we see them get better. And oh my goodness, never one thing, as you know, Dr. Ronnie, you know, for the eyes, it's never one thing.

I mean, that's why you wrote your fantastic book about food. You know, it's not just some magic eye drop, you know, or, you know, some berry from the Amazon.

I mean, it's a lot of different facets. And it's also that way with the oral microbiome. So there are several things we do. The test I use in clinic is from Access Genetics called Myperiopath Oral DNA.

And then for home use on my website, there's a link that people can do like their own home test from Bristol Health, a very good test too. But we look at this specific.

profile of bacteria. We used to just sort of think that it was only porphyromonas gingivalis that mattered. Now we know that there's also another bacteria called Fusobacterium nucleotum that is a bridge builder.

It's one of those bacteria that makes everything else worse. So it's very, very big for cognition in terms of gut health. And then, of course, the gut-brain axis.

You know, it's very inflammatory. It makes a lot of other bad bugs worse. And so that's a big part of the picture. Additionally, nitric oxide really matters in terms of brain health.

I mean, increasing nitric oxide. So a lot of people, Dr. Rani, are using these strong antimicrobial mouthwashes that are killing everything. You know, if it kills 99.9% of You know, that's not a good thing because there's about 700… They're there for a reason, right?

They're there for a reason and they're doing good things. They're producing nitric oxide. So they're eradicating this. A really interesting case I saw recently.

A woman, the cardiologist had tested her oral DNA and it looks really good. I mean, it is no problems. Sent the patient to me anyway to see what you can find.

And she had had enough decline that her daughter had to bring her. And so I'm asking questions and it just hit me. I said, what kind of mouthwash do you use?

And her daughter butted in and she said, she is addicted to, I don't know if I should say the brand, but a brand we've all heard of. She's addicted to it.

She loves it. She uses it three times a day and she has 40 years. So she's no nitric oxide. We tested her nitric oxide. She had zero. So just to give that, you know, open helped her so much.

Wow. So did she, was she able to regain some of her cognitive function when she stopped that habit of three times a day using the mouthwash? So we had her take nitric oxide supplements, and then she was, last time I saw her, she was getting better.

It's never overnight. So what seems to happen, and I'm sure you've seen this, Dr.

Oral Bacteria, Brain Health, and Cognition

Ronnie, people, they get one little step, and then they feel like doing something else. And then, hey, they can do something else. So now maybe they feel like taking a walk.

Well, maybe now they take a walk and they'll eat more fresh fruits and veggies. And they eat more fruits and veggies, and then they're pooping better, so they're happier.

So then they're getting better sleep. And you know what I'm saying? It's just- Yes, it's the domino effect, but in a good way, right? So nice. So a really interesting case I saw probably, I don't know, at least 10 years ago.

a woman came in, a young woman in her 50s who had the apoeene, very worried. Her husband had to bring her. She couldn't drive. She had high porphyromonas gingivalis.

The whole profile of what we call red complex that are very inflammatory bacteria as well as high fusibacterium. With her, Dr. Rani, I actually got her cleaned up and I do the deep cleanings.

I use a laser and I use ozone and have a whole regimen. But I wasn't using Ozone when I saw her actually 10 years ago. But I made videos for her to show her how to clean her teeth.

Because, you know, that's the thing. Just like when you see a patient, you tell them what to do and they get home and they go, what did Dr. Ronnie say?

It's hard to recall all that information. It is, it's overburdened. So I started making videos for people, but this is the first person I made videos for on how to clean her teeth.

Well, about four months later, she just comes in, didn't have an appointment. She said, I just wanted to stick my head in and say hi because I'm driving myself now and I'm feeling so much better.

It wasn't just her mouth because she was going to a very astute functional medicine physician who was helping her

in a lot of areas. But this was a piece of it.

These stories are incredible, these transformations, and I've seen them too. I've seen them with respect to people's deteriorating vision. You fix one thing, or you start to fix one thing, and then you start to see the multiplication effect.

All of a sudden, your cognition is a little bit better, and your gut health is better, and your skin health is better, and you get sick less. It's so worth it.

to make that one change. Well, Dr. Debbie, this has been such a fascinating discussion. I love your energy. I love hearing about your stories and how you've helped people.

We're going to take a very short break to hear from one of our sponsors, and then we'll be right back with more on the IQ Podcast. Stay tuned. Did you know that your gut health can play a crucial role in maintaining your eye health?

Inside your gut, there is a bustling community of microorganisms, known as the gut microbiome. When this community is balanced, your entire body, including your eyes, can benefit.

Research shows that imbalances in your gut microbiome, called gut dysbiosis, can contribute to eye conditions like uveitis, dry eye syndrome, age-related macular degeneration, and glaucoma.

To help you support your gut and your vision, America's integrative neuro-ophthalmologist, Dr. Ronnie Bonik, developed Balance, a potent probiotic. Balance provides 10 highly researched strains carefully selected for gut and vision health.

Balance's moisture resistant specially lined packaging ensures strain viability. With Balance, you can promote a healthy gut microbiome. This may help reduce the risk of eye conditions linked to gut dysbiosis.

Support your gut and support your eyes with Balance. Welcome back to the IQ Podcast. Today we're chatting with Dr. Debbie Osment, who's a functional medicine dentist based out of Oklahoma.

And she's got a wealth of information, over 40 years of experience. I mean, I'm sure you could tell so many stories, Dr. Debbie, of how you've helped people along the way with not just their teeth, their oral hygiene and health, but their entire body.

You mentioned earlier about, we're talking about the oral microbiome. and you mentioned how important the gut is. I think you wanted to share a particular story of someone with their gut health and how you helped them to uncover what was going on and then achieve better quality of health.

You wanna go ahead and share that story? Yes, as a result of, you know, my practice is limited to physician referrals with people with chronic inflammatory problems.

And initially we saw that high C-reactive protein was really something we could effectively lower with just some simple things orally. But then I started seeing a lot of cases of colorectal cancer and learned through, I guess, observation that Fusibacterium nucleotum and oral bacteria can be found in the gut.

And actually some stool tests test for fusobacterium in the gut. And there we know that it very much disrupts the gut, not just in terms of inflammation, but now we know it can make tumors grow.

And in some, after I did my Ted talk, a researcher wrote to me from Germany and said, we're going to find out that fusobacterium is actually causal for colorectal cancer.

So that is really coming out in the research. pretty strongly. But Dr. Rani, a very important thing that happened I think your listeners need to know about is the stories around a patient who came to me who had suffered colorectal

cancer and had a resection of his gut wearing a pump of five-fluorouracil pump and his tumors were still growing.

So I tested his oral microbiome, tested his gut, sure enough, Fusobacterium was high in his mouth, in his gut, and just chose to do my treatment on him, but also I used antibiotics.

I don't use antibiotics lightly, but we did use metronidazole, which is also called fragile. And three months later, his wife called me and she said his tumors are almost gone.

And I was shocked because that was really just, you know, the intention was to get rid of the Fuso, but not realizing how it was so implicated in his cancer treatment.

So as I started researching this, and now the research is pretty widespread, science has found that Fusobacterium can inhibit 5-fluorouracil, 5-FU, and other chemotherapeutic agents, including cisplatin.

The first one discovered was 5-FU. That was the chemo drug that this gentleman was on. But it's crazy, you know, these bacteria can make cancer cells resistant to chemotherapy.

Wow, so now we know and now we, you know, all of us that work together in this area of the country, we know that if Fusibacterium is high in the gut, now we can isolate it to even a subspecies.

But nevertheless, it doesn't hurt anybody to, you know, to find out that if that's high to take an antibiotic round. The oncologists are very happy to do that and they appreciate that that makes Well, this is absolutely fascinating.

And I hope lots of people, lots more people listen to your TEDx talk. We'll definitely put the link in the show notes in case anyone's interested. I mean, that is just, it blows my mind to think about that, that more people don't know about this connection.

We're learning every day.

Oral Health, Cancer, and Systemic Disease

I have a robust research tab on my website that you can download these research studies for yourself and see how worldwide, I mean globally, people are covering how much the oral microbiome impacts systemic health from top to bottom.

I can't tell you how many women have gotten pregnant or been able to sustain pregnancies. These oral pathogens can translocate, lodge in the fallopian tubes in adverse pregnancy outcomes.

It's just… Oh, wow. So organs you wouldn't normally associate with the GI tract, right? Right. Wow, fascinating. Well, Dr. Debbie, I'm going to now ask you, you have, again, so much experience in this.

For some of our listeners, if you had to give them three tips to help them support their oral microbiome health and their hygiene, and again, that may impact their overall health, what would those three tips be?

simple things that they can do DIY. They don't need a practitioner for things that they can include into their daily routine. What would those things be?

And I'm here in my my little office so things are close by and I was hoping you would ask that because I researched you and you're so awesome so I thought you might.

So I would recommend these little brush picks. You can get these anywhere. Now the thing about these brush picks that's special is that you can clean between your teeth.

You can scrub between your teeth. These bacteria live in a biofilm. So they live in this gooey substance between your teeth and they protect each other.

Now, Floss is great, but floss doesn't scrub off the biofilm as effectively as these little brushes. The brushes are based on medical mission trips that I've been on and seen people in foreign countries who, you know, once in a while you see somebody that has these awesome teeth and I found out that they would get a little twig and smooth it off, tear off the rough edges and use that as between their teeth.

So you want to get between your teeth and you want to scrub. I mean, you're scrubbing the barnacles. Can you hear it? Oh, yeah. So you can do this just sitting like you don't need water.

You don't need like any toothpaste. You're just sitting and doing it. Yeah. I don't like it that they're plastic, Dr. Ronnie. But that works, you know.

What you can get, right? You can go out and get your own twigs, I guess. You can make your own twigs. I just haven't done that. But you just want to scrub.

And of course, when you're between two teeth, you've got two edges to clean. And you want to push against the tooth. You're not going to hurt your gums.

It's hard to see on the video, but does it have like a little bristle at the end of it? Yes, it has a little soft bristles. Okay, I think it's perfectly designed to get in the in between those hard to yeah, I don't want to like gross your listeners out.

But I mean, you know, it's great to see the the demonstration. Absolutely. So how often should one be doing that every day or twice a day? I would say I mean, it's very addictive.

It feels so good. So that would be the first thing. The second thing would be to check out black seed oil, Nigella sativa. So I bottle up organic, cold pressed black seed oil, hexane free, Nigella sativa for each one of my patients.

I put it in a dropper bottle. And there's several ways you can do it. Nigella sativa has an active ingredient called thymoquinone. And thymoquinone has been extensively studied.

A lot of those studies are on my website too. that we've seen real benefits. I mean, anybody can afford a bottle of Nigella sativa. So a good way to do it, we call this the Mike method because my husband came up with it, but put a little few drops in your hand and just slide that brush in it and then use it with the brush.

Okay, so you just douse it and then… Yeah, that's a wonderful method. People love that. Another thing you can do is put a few drops on your toothpaste.

I'm presuming it's safe to ingest, right? That particular oil? Yeah, it is safe to ingest. You know, there's a lot of research too about how good it is for type 2 diabetes and just a whole myriad of things.

A lot of skin care. And then also oil pulling. I really advocate oil pulling, but people who love oil pulling love oil pulling. It's very hard for a lot of people.

So actually, you know, Dr. Ronnie, that the Mike method of in the hand, a few drops really works for people and they can get it in between their teeth.

And so we can do these. That's enough. That's just a few drops on the brush is enough. Yes. And you don't have to do an actual like rinse oil pull like.

around your mouth for like 15 minutes or anything like that. If you want to, I think that's awesome. I think oil pulling is fantastic. But if you want the faster method and if you, you know, if oil pulling is not for you, people will say, I tried it and I'm just not doing it and I need to do it.

I said, well, try this, do what works. I mean, the best strategy is the one you'll do. And then the third thing I would want your listeners to know is that bleeding gums are infected.

They are inflamed. Bleeding gums are never, never, never, never, never healthy, no matter how many times your dentist has said, oh, you have a little bleeding, no problem.

I mean, you would never say to a person, oh, you're getting a little glaucoma, no problem. You're getting a little you know, whatever, uh, no, we want to indicator.

Something's not right, right? Something's not healthy. It's like a, it's like the check engine lot in your car. I mean, if you don't want to just ignore it.

So, you know, use the brush picks, use the Nigella sativa, black seed oil, try to get organic, cold press, hexane free, and then notice where you have bleeding.

Practical Tips for a Healthier Mouth

And I would say if you're just don't, don't ignore the bleeding because your teeth are the last to go. This is really not about your teeth. I mean, if you do these things, it's going to lower your blood sugar.

It's going to increase cognition. You're going to have better eye health. You're going to have better sexual health. You're going to have less chance of cancer, you know, heart attack, stroke, I mean, on auto-immunity on and on down the down the line.

A patient texted me today and the same things I'm telling you. And she said, I don't know if I'm dreaming. I mean, this is a real tech. She said, my constipation is gone, and I'm not having that terrible gas I was having.

And really, it's getting her mouth clean. I mean, that's all it was. Wow, the tremendous impact. Wow, incredible. Well, Dr. Debbie, this has been such a fascinating discussion.

I could talk to you for like another hour, but I know I know I want to respect your time and also respect our listeners time for this podcast, but I would love to have you come back because there's actually, I had my list of topics I wanted to ask you and I only got like three of those things asked.

So there's a lot more I want to ask you. I also deal a lot with migraines and issues with sleep apnea, which I know that the oral environment has a role in.

So I would love to ask you all those questions. I'm definitely going to have you back at some point, Dr. Debbie. Yes, we could talk about all of that, root canals.

I'd love to talk about migraines. Yes, it's something that I see every day in my practice. About 50% of my patients have migraines, so they would benefit so much from your expertise.

But in the meantime, please tell us, Dr. Debbie, how can people find you? And I think you have a course that you offer as well, so could you share about that a little bit?

Oh, thank you, Dr. Ronnie. You can just find me at drdebbyosment.com, O-Z-M-E-N-T. I'm on Instagram, and it's a free course right now. It's called Upstream Gut Health, and it's just very, very down home, but it has a lot of tips and things that will save you, hopefully, a lot of health problems, increase your health span, increase your vitality span, and join me on my podcast.

Vitality Made Simple, you'll get to hear Dr. Ronnie being questioned. Looking forward to it. Yeah, so we will share all those links for your website, your podcast, for the TEDx Talk, and then for your free course.

Well, Dr. Debbie, it's been a pleasure and I love your energy. I love your positivity. If you wanted to leave our listeners with one last thought or comment, what would that be?

I would say just know that your body is designed to heal and you just have to take these small steps. There's not

one thing that's the main thing, but look at the mirror and say, my body is designed to heal and I want to find out what to give it that it needs and enjoy that healing.

I love that. Yeah, I always say our bodies are resilient. They really are, and they want to function well and do well. So we just have to find the path, right?

And I am so excited to try some of your tips. I'm actually going to go to the store right now and get some of those little brushes. I'm going to go pick some up right now and get some of that Nigella sativa oil.

But thank you, Dr. Debbie, so much for being on the IQ Podcast. And I look forward to seeing you again back, back again on the podcast. And I look forward to seeing the rest of you soon on another episode of the IQ Podcast.

So please stay tuned. Thank you. You're very welcome. Bye-bye everyone. Thank you for tuning in to the IQ Podcast. I hope you enjoyed today's episode and learned something new to help you boost your IQ.

Leave us a review and share the podcast with your family and friends. Stay connected with me for more eye-opening insights on eye health, nutrition, and lifestyle.

Until next time, keep your vision clear and your IQ sharp.