

# CHRONIC SYSTEMIC *Inflammation*

BY DR. SUSAN MAPLES

Even though Chronic Inflammation has been a cover-featured article in almost every major publication, the subject remains one of the most misunderstood concepts in health care. I continually ask my audiences of dentists, “So do you think inflammation is a good thing or a bad thing?” They are usually surprised to learn that it’s both.

Acute inflammation is good, as it’s the body’s reaction to a negative stimulus and without it we would die. We know when it happens because it usually elicits pain. Our body’s ability to instantly congregate an army of white blood cells to fight bacteria and repair our damaged cells, is nothing short of miraculous. In less than 10 days, our cells are often able to recover from most insults and replenish themselves.

But what if the insult doesn’t go away? That’s when we remain inflamed for a long time (aka Chronic

Systemic Inflammation (CSI)) and it has some terrible consequences. Unfortunately, many sources of CSI don’t hurt, so we don’t even have the mindfulness that anything is wrong. Periodontal (gum) disease is a prime example. There is usually no pain but it’s dangerous, as it is recognized as the largest portal of bacteria to the human body.

At the scene of the crime, our hard-working white blood cells produce an abundance of byproducts (called cytokines), that circulate throughout our blood vessels and irritate the linings of all our blood vessels. In other words, CSI causes breakdown to the inner lining of our blood vessels and these weak spots become more penetrable to bad cholesterol (LDLs) and certain strains of bacteria. Turns out the best way to develop a “plaque” in your blood vessel wall (one that can rupture to cause a heart attack or stroke) is to weaken the wall by sustaining chronic inflammation.

CSI can result from many insults besides gum disease: obesity, sleep apnea, insulin resistance, low vitamin D, acid reflux, food sensitivities, drugs and toxins, arthritis and the list goes on.

One of the unfortunate effects of CSI is weight gain. Think about the swelling a cut in your finger takes on, soon after insult. CSI creates fluid retention. It’s amazing to see the weight loss that occurs when someone identifies and tackles the source of their inflammation.

To learn more about the symptoms of CSI, take this self test now. Scan the QR code and take it digitally or grab a pen and go!



*Dr. Susan Maples is a dentist in Holt. She is also a speaker, health educator and author of BlabberMouth! 77 Secrets Only Your Mouth Can Tell You to Live a Healthier, Happier, Sexier Life. Reach her at Susan@DrSusanMaples.com*

## Do you have Chronic Systemic Inflammation?

(Yes = 2 points, Sometimes = 1 point, No = 0 points)



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Is your waistline above 35 inches for women and above 40 inches for men?  | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Do you have red/puffy/bleeding gums when you brush or floss ... or have bad breath?         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Do you, despite considerable effort have difficulty losing weight?  | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Do you smoke?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Do you suffer from unexplainable achy joints or sore muscles?   | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Do you have significant and persistent stress in your life?                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Do you suffer from food sensitivities or GI disturbance such as discomfort, bloating, constipation or diarrhea? | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Do you have persistent unexplained nasal congestion?                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Do you have depleted energy levels or problems sleeping?  | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Do you have diabetes, hypertension or high cholesterol/lipid profile?                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Do you have dry, patchy, red or irritated skin, itchy ears or irritated eyes?                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Do you suffer from any other chronic diseases?   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Do you take any medications (prescription or OTC — not including nutritional supplements)? |

### Scoring

0 – 5 unlikely suspicion

5 – 10 moderate suspicion

11+ high suspicion



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