

Prevent Diabetes Problems

Keep your teeth and gums healthy

What are Diabetes problems?

Too much sugar in the blood for a long time causes diabetes problems. The high blood sugar can damage many parts of the body, such as the heart, blood vessels, and kidneys. Diabetes problems can be scary, but there is a lot you can do to prevent them or slow them down.

How can diabetes hurt my teeth and gums?

Tooth and gum problems can happen to anyone. A sticky film full of germs (also called plaque [PLAK] builds up on your teeth. High blood sugar helps germs grow. Then you can have red, sore, and swollen gums, that can bleed when you brush them.

Identify signs of disease:

Sore, swollen and red gums that bleed when you brush your teeth are a sign of a problem called **gingivitis**. Another problem, called **periodontitis**, happens when your gums shrink or pull away from the teeth. Like all infections dental infections can make your blood glucose increase. High blood sugars can make tooth and gum problems worse. You can lose your teeth.



Smoking can make it more likely for you to get a bad case of gum disease, especially if you have diabetes and are age 45 or older.

Prevent dental problems:

Keep your blood glucose under control.

High blood glucose can cause problems with your teeth and gums. Work with your health care team to keep your blood glucose levels as close to normal as you can.

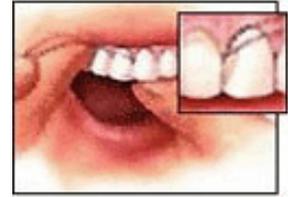
Brush your teeth often:

Brush your teeth at least twice a day to prevent gum disease and tooth loss. Be sure to brush before you go to sleep. Use a soft toothbrush and tooth paste with fluoride. To help keep bacteria from growing on your toothbrush, rinse it after each brushing and store it upright with the bristles at the top. Get a new toothbrush at least every three months.



Floss your teeth:

Besides brushing, floss between your teeth each day to remove the plaque, a film that forms on teeth and can cause tooth decay. Flossing also keeps your gums healthy. If you are not sure of the right way to brush or floss, ask your dentist or dental hygienist for help.



Get regular dental care:

Get your teeth and gums cleaned and checked by your dentist at least every six months.

If you do not have a dentist find one, find one or ask your nurse practitioner for the name of a dentist in your community.

If your dentist tells you about a problem, take care of it right away.

Be sure your dentist knows you have diabetes.

Plan your dentist visits so they don't change the time you take insulin and meals. Do not skip a meal or any diabetes medication before your visit. Right after breakfast maybe a good time for your dentist visit.

If you wear false teeth, make sure they fit you well and you keep them clean.

If you smoke, talk to your doctor about ways to quit smoking.

There are more advantages to good oral hygiene than an attractive smile- preventing tooth decay, periodontal(gum) disease and mouth infections.

Remember, a balanced and nutritional diet, diabetes care and management, good oral hygiene and regular visits to the dentist is a winning combination for a healthy mouth and an attractive smile.

