



Diabetes and Oral Health Fact Sheet

OCTOBER 2017

The Challenge...

30.3 million people have diabetes, and 1 in 4 do not know they have it. 1 out of every 3 adults has prediabetes and 9 out of 10 do not know it.¹ A person with diabetes has an increased risk for heart disease, stroke, and even death. Additionally, those with diabetes are more likely to have oral health complications.²

What you need to know...

Gum disease and diabetes are connected. Gum disease can increase insulin resistance, and it is harder for those with gum disease to control their blood sugar and manage their diabetes. Uncontrolled blood sugar can lead to an increase in the rate of inflammation and bone loss associated with gum disease. People with diabetes who take good care of their gums have better control of their blood sugar.³

Diabetes weakens the mouth's ability to manage bacteria, swelling and disease. As a result, people with diabetes are at two times the risk for losing their teeth, and at three times the risk of getting gum disease. They also have a greater chance of developing sores in the mouth.⁴

Burning mouth syndrome, dry mouth, tongue swelling, and cracks in the corners of the mouth can occur in individuals with diabetes. Diabetes medications can also increase dry mouth symptoms, increasing risk for dental decay, especially on the root of the tooth if you have recession or gum disease.



Ways You Can Help...

- Control your blood sugar level.
- Brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes with fluoridated toothpaste, and floss daily.
- Visit your dental provider every 6 months or as recommended.
- If your mouth feels dry, drink plenty of water and use sugarless gum or lozenges.
- If you wear dentures, remove them at night to prevent fungal infections.
- Avoid tobacco products. Ask your medical or dental provider how to access the QUIT Line: 1-800-QUIT-NOW.
- Let your dental provider know that you have diabetes, and discuss an oral prevention action plan for your mouth.⁵

Manage your diabetes with regular dental screenings for the following:

Symptoms:

- Bone loss
- Gum swelling
- Dry mouth
- Loss of taste
- Infections
- Delayed wound healing

Increased Risk:

- Dental decay especially in the root of the tooth
- Tooth loss
- Non-cancerous tumors in the salivary glands
- Sores and ulcers in the mouth

Footnotes:

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep/pdfs/ppod-guide.pdf>
2. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4499526/>
3. <http://www.nature.com/bdj/journal/v217/n8/full/sj.bdj.2014.907.html>
4. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24509898>
5. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12020-014-0496-3>

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