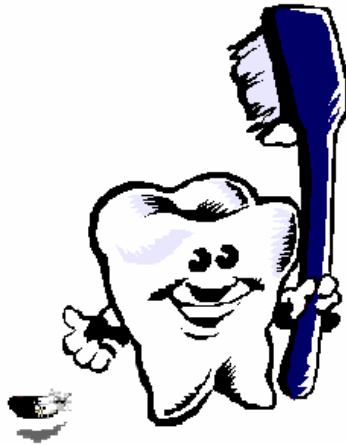


Diabetes and Gum Disease

- People with diabetes have a higher than normal risk for gum disease and other infections.
- Gum (periodontal) diseases are infections of the gum and bone that hold your teeth in place.
- Infections in the mouth can affect your ability to control your blood sugar.
- People with poor blood sugar control get gum disease more often and more severely, and they lose more teeth than do people with good blood sugar control.
- Many kinds of bacteria (germs) thrive on sugar, so when your blood sugar is high the amount of sugar in your saliva (spit) increases and the germs in your mouth grow faster and can start gum disease.
- Blood vessels deliver oxygen and nourishment to your body parts, including the mouth, and carry away the tissue's waste products. Diabetes causes blood to thicken, which slows the flow of nutrients to the tissues and makes it harder to remove harmful wastes. This weakens the resistance of the gums and bone to infection.
- Smoking increases the chances of getting gum disease. If you are a smoker with diabetes, age 45 or older, you are 20 times more likely than a person without these risk factors to get severe gum disease.
- Poor brushing and flossing habits allow dental plaque – a sticky film of germs- to build up on teeth. These germs irritate the gums and cause them to get red and swollen and the gums may bleed when you brush.
- When germs are not removed by daily brushing and flossing they build a thicker layer and harden on the teeth and under the gums (tartar). The gums pull away from the teeth, forming pockets of infection. The infection leads to loss of the bone that holds the tooth in its socket. The tooth then gets loose.
- Diabetics who need teeth removed take longer to heal after surgery than people without diabetes.
- Thrush is an infection caused by a fungus that grows in the mouth. People with diabetes are at risk for thrush because the fungus thrives on the high sugar levels found in saliva.
- Dry mouth is often a sign of undetected diabetes. A lack of saliva can cause soreness, ulcers, infections and tooth decay.

- More than 400 drugs can cause dry mouth, so if you are taking medications, tell your doctor or dentist if your mouth feels dry.

For more information on diabetes and gum disease or to arrange for a presentation to your group, please contact:



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