

Diabetes and Oral Health: A Relationship Worth Being Aware Of

Diabetes is a condition in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin.

Insulin, a hormone made by the pancreas, converts sugar and other foods into glucose. It then helps carry the glucose from the blood into your cells to be used for energy needed for daily life. Without insulin, your blood glucose level rises.

Diabetes makes all the tissues in your body more susceptible to infection, including the tissues in your mouth. In fact, people with diabetes are twice as likely to develop gum disease when their blood glucose (sugar) levels are poorly controlled.



Gum disease is caused by the bacteria in plaque-a sticky, colorless film that forms on your teeth. The plaque bacteria release toxins that irritate the gums.

The first stage of gum disease is called gingivitis. Symptoms may include:

- Gums that bleed easily, especially during flossing or brushing
- Red, swollen or tender gums

Left untreated, plaque may cause a more advanced form of gum disease called periodontitis.

Symptoms may include:

- Gums that have pulled away from your teeth
- Change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite
- Persistent bad breath or bad taste in your mouth

At this stage, you may have damage to the bone that supports your teeth. If not treated by a dentist, you could lose teeth.

Oral Care Tips

With proper dental care and control of blood glucose levels, many people with diabetes are able to maintain a healthy mouth.
Here are a few tips to help keep your smile healthy and bright:
Brush at least twice a day and floss regularly

Colgate

Colgate