

DOES DIABETES AFFECT ORAL HEALTH?

If you have diabetes, it can affect many parts of your body. This includes your teeth and gums. The effect is even greater when your blood sugar is not well controlled, making it harder to fight bacterial infections.

Plaque buildup

Plaque is a clear, sticky layer of bacteria that forms on teeth. If it is not removed, it can lead to infections such as gum disease.

If your high blood sugar is not controlled, you may have more plaque bacteria than most people. That means you are more at risk for oral health problems.



Plaque buildup

Gingivitis

Gingivitis is a form of gum disease. It is caused by a buildup of plaque and tartar on the teeth and gums.

If you have diabetes, it is harder for your body to control plaque bacteria. That is why people with diabetes are 3 to 4 times more likely to get gum disease.

Be sure to see your dental professional if you have any of these symptoms:

- Red gums
- Swollen or tender gums
- Gums that bleed easily



Red, swollen gums

Periodontal disease

If gingivitis is left untreated, it can turn into **periodontitis**. This is a more serious form of gum disease. Over time, it can cause your gums to pull away from your teeth, causing teeth to become loose.

Oral health can affect diabetes, too

Having an infection like gum disease can affect your blood sugar. That's why it's vital to practice good oral care habits at home. It can help you protect your oral health, as well as manage your diabetes.



Be sure to use your blood glucose meter! It can help you control your blood sugar levels and protect your oral health.

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Special oral health tips for people with diabetes

Take good care of your teeth at home.

- Brush at least twice a day. Be sure to use an antibacterial toothpaste that contains fluoride.
- Make sure to floss at least once a day.
- Try using an antibacterial mouthwash (without alcohol) at least once a day. This can help kill bacteria and control plaque.

And be sure to:

- Tell your dental professional that you have diabetes.
- Go for regular dental cleanings every 6 months (more often if directed by your dental professional).
- Tell your dental professional if you notice any symptoms of gum disease, such as bleeding and swelling.
- If you need to have dental surgery, ask your dentist to talk to your doctor. You may need to change your medicine or take a new one to help prevent infection.

Quick facts about diabetes and oral health

Taking good care of your gums and teeth is key when you have diabetes, helping you protect your teeth and gums for life.

- Uncontrolled blood sugar can affect your gums and teeth. It can cause an increase in plaque bacteria.
- People with diabetes are 3 to 4 times as likely to get a gum infection.
- Diabetes makes it harder to fight off infections, including gum disease.
- Gum disease can make it harder to control diabetes.

Want to learn more about diabetes and oral health? Talk to your dental professional or visit oralb.com.