

Your diabetes can affect your teeth. Having uncontrolled diabetes can mean you're more likely to get gum disease or the other problems below. The good news: Good habits will help keep your mouth healthy.

Diabetes can make you more likely to have cavities and fungal infections. Other potential problems include:

- Difficulty fighting off infections, including those that might lead to gum disease
- Slower healing time after dental surgery



Dry mouth, called xerostomia, is common among people with diabetes. Saliva is important to oral health -- it helps wash away food particles and keep the mouth moist. When you don't produce enough moisture, bacteria thrive, tissues can get irritated and inflamed, and your teeth can be more prone to decay.



DENTAL TIPS FOR DIABETICS

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Diabetes and Oral Health Directory

Good oral health contributes to overall good health. Problems maintaining blood sugar levels can lead to more frequent or more severe oral health problems. Also, the condition impairs white blood cells and exposes a person to dry mouth, infection, and gingivitis. Another problem may include wounds that heal slowly. Additionally, dentist visits need to be carefully coordinated to avoid medication complications. Also, diabetes patients may be required to take antibiotics prior getting dental care or surgery. Follow the links below to find WebMD's comprehensive coverage about diabetes and oral health, what it looks like, treatments, and much more.

Dental Tips for Diabetics

- Controlling your blood glucose is the most important step you can take to prevent tooth and gum problems. People with diabetes, especially those whose blood glucose levels are poorly controlled, are more likely to get gum infections than nondiabetics. A severe gum infection can also make it more difficult to control your diabetes. Once such an infection starts in a person with diabetes, it

takes longer to heal. If the infection lasts for a long time, the diabetic person may lose teeth.

- Much of what you eat requires good teeth for chewing, so it is extremely important to try to preserve your teeth. Because the bone surrounding the teeth may sometimes be damaged by infection, dentures may not always fit properly and may not be perfect substitutes for your natural teeth.
- Taking good care of your gums and teeth is another important measure. Use a soft-bristle brush between the gums and the teeth in a vibrating motion. Place the rubber tip on the toothbrush between the teeth and move it in a circle.
- If you notice that your gums bleed while you are eating or brushing your teeth, see a dentist to determine if you have a beginning infection. You should also notify your dentist if you notice other abnormal changes in your mouth, such as patches of whitish-colored skin.
- **Have a dental checkup every 6 months. Be sure to tell your dentist that you have diabetes and ask him or her to demonstrate procedures that will help you maintain healthy teeth and gums.**

