

Diabetes & Gum Disease

Diabetes and oral health go hand-in-hand:

People with poorly controlled diabetes are more likely to develop gum disease, which in turn can contribute to the progression of diabetes.

Numbers to Know



Approximately

75%

of American adults have some form of gum disease.³

30.3 million

Americans have some form of diabetes.⁴

1/3 of people with diabetes have severe periodontitis.⁵

Young adults with diabetes have **2x the risk of periodontitis** than those without diabetes.⁵

Dental care can make a difference

Professional dental care is necessary to diagnose, treat, and/or stop the progression of gum disease. If you have diabetes, follow these steps to get the most from your dental care and insurance:

- Schedule regular dental visits – depending on your condition, your dentist may recommend more frequent cleanings and exams
- Inform your dentist of any health conditions, medications, and symptoms
- Offer to connect your dental and medical professionals to better coordinate your care
- Talk to your dentist about whether or not you have gum disease and the recommended treatment, which may include:
 - A routine dental cleaning, which may reverse the early stages of gum disease
 - Scaling and root planning (or deep cleaning) – For more severe stages, this procedure scrapes tartar from above and below the gum line and removes rough spots on the tooth's root where bacteria can collect
 - Surgery may be required in extreme cases or when other treatments have failed
- Review your dental insurance coverage – While insurance may not cover everything your dentist recommends, it's helpful to know what's covered in advance.

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Sources: 1. Periodontal (Gum) Disease: Causes, Symptoms, and Treatments; National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research; December 2014
2. Impact of Periodontal Therapy on General Health; American Journal of Preventive Medicine; 2014 3. Dispelling Myths About Gum Disease; American Academy of Periodontology; 2010 4. Statistics About Diabetes; American Diabetes Association; July 2017 5. What Dental Professionals Would Like Team Members to Know About Oral Health and Diabetes; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 6. Oral Health and Hygiene; American Diabetes Association, September 2012 7. Diabetes, Gum Disease, and Other Dental Problems; National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, September 2014 8. Diabetes and dental care: Guide to a healthy mouth; Mayo Clinic; September 2015 9. Diabetes and Oral Health Problems; American Diabetes Association; September 2012

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What is Gum Disease?

Also referred to as periodontal disease, gum disease is a largely preventable condition where the bacteria in plaque causes inflammation and destruction of the gums and supporting bone.¹

There are two main types:

Gingivitis

A mild form of gum disease that can be marked by red, swollen or bleeding gums – or may have no noticeable symptoms. In this early stage of gum disease, there is no bone loss around the teeth.¹



Periodontitis

A serious infection that may occur if gingivitis is left untreated. It first causes the gums to recede from the teeth, creating pockets that become infected. As it worsens, the body's immune system may respond by destroying the tissues and bone that hold the teeth in place.¹



Cause = Effect

- Diabetes can reduce saliva production and cause dry mouth, a risk factor for gum disease.⁷
- High blood sugar from poorly controlled diabetes can increase oral bacteria and contribute to the buildup of gum disease-causing plaque.^{7,8}
- Since diabetes makes it harder for the body to fight infection, gum disease may be more severe and harder to treat and maintain.⁸



- Periodontitis may impact the body's ability to control blood sugar, making diabetes more difficult to control.⁶
- Getting the proper care at the dentist can lead to improved overall health for people with diabetes.²

At-Home Oral Health Care Tips⁹



Brush teeth 2-3x and floss at least once daily – ask your dentist about proper techniques and recommended products



Drink water throughout the day and use it to rinse after eating or drinking other beverages



Avoid using tobacco



Eat a balanced diet, avoiding sugary or starchy snacks and beverages⁹



Remove and clean dentures daily



Follow physician's guidelines for managing diabetes