

## Diabetes and Your Oral Health



While many people are aware of the risks associated with diabetes, they may be less informed about the important connection to oral health. But the truth is, diabetes can impact the state of your mouth and in turn, the health of your mouth can make it more difficult to control your blood sugar. It's especially important for those with diabetes to keep their mouth, teeth and gums as healthy as possible.<sup>1</sup>

### Diabetes and oral health go hand-in-hand

People with poorly controlled diabetes are more likely to develop dental health issues like gum disease, which in turn can make it more difficult to manage diabetes.

- Diabetes can reduce saliva production and cause dry mouth, a risk factor for gum disease.<sup>2</sup> High blood sugar from poorly controlled diabetes can increase oral bacteria and contribute to the buildup of gum disease-causing plaque.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Since diabetes makes it harder for the body to fight infection, gum disease may be more severe and harder to treat and maintain.<sup>3</sup>
- When gum disease reaches a more advanced, severe stage called periodontitis, it may impact the body's ability to control blood sugar, making diabetes more difficult to control.<sup>1</sup>



**Gum disease, also called periodontal disease, is a largely preventable condition where the bacteria in plaque cause inflammation and destruction of the gums and supporting bone.<sup>1</sup>**

## Professional dental care can make a difference

The good news is that research shows getting the proper care at the dentist can lead to improved overall health for people with diabetes.<sup>4</sup> In order to identify, treat, and/or stop the progression of gum disease, it's important to see your dentist on a regular basis. 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
- Review your dental insurance coverage—while insurance may not cover everything your dentist recommends, it's helpful to know what's covered in advance
- Follow your dentist's recommendations for proper at-home oral hygiene

**For more information and tips on diabetes and oral health management, visit [UnitedConcordia.com](http://UnitedConcordia.com).**

1. Oral Health and Hygiene; American Diabetes Association, September 2012
2. Diabetes, Gum Disease, and Other Dental Problems; National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, September 2014
3. Diabetes and dental care: Guide to a healthy mouth; Mayo Clinic; September 2015
4. Impact of Periodontal Therapy on General Health; American Journal of Preventive Medicine; 2014



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