



Sources

Academy of General Dentistry: www.agd.org

American Academy of Periodontology: www.perio.org

American Dental Association: www.ada.org

American Diabetes Association: www.diabetes.org

National Institutes of Health: National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse:
www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov

BARRICKS INSURANCE SERVICES

13900 NW Passage #302

Marina Del Rey, CA 90292

Phone: (877) 566-5454

<http://www.barricksinsurance.com>



Anthem Blue Cross Life and Health Insurance Company is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Association. © ANTHEM is a registered trademark. © The Blue Cross name and symbol are registered marks of the Blue Cross Association.

MCABR1904C 5/08

Diabetes and Oral Health

How diabetes can affect
your teeth and gums



If you have diabetes, you know the disease can harm the kidneys, eyes, blood vessels and heart. But did you know diabetes can also affect your oral health?

Good oral health not only keeps your mouth and gums free from infection, but it can also have a significant impact on the control of diabetes.

It takes two: the link between diabetes and periodontal disease

According to the American Diabetes Association, approximately 18.2 million Americans have diabetes, but 5.2 million of them have not been diagnosed. And people who have diabetes are particularly at risk for periodontal disease, in part because diabetics are more vulnerable to contracting infections.

Periodontal disease is an infection of the gums that can damage bone and tissue in and around the mouth, and can even lead to tooth loss. This can make it difficult for you to chew and digest food, which can interfere with you obtaining the proper nutrition you need and keeping your blood sugar in check.

Periodontal disease can make it quite challenging for diabetics to control their blood sugar – and good diabetic control is key to helping to reduce the risk for periodontal disease. Periodontal disease increases the body's inflammatory signals, which, in turn, increases your blood sugar. When this occurs, your body functions with an unhealthy blood sugar level for increased periods of time. It is very important that you treat periodontal disease to eliminate the infection, which can hamper glycemic control.

Telltale signs of periodontal disease

If you have one or more of the following symptoms, you may have periodontal disease from diabetes and should seek dental attention immediately:

- Red, sore or swollen gums
- Bleeding gums
- Gums that have pulled away from your teeth (recession)
- Persistent bad breath or bad taste in your mouth
- Milky white or yellow plaque deposits, which are heaviest between your teeth
- Pus between the teeth and gums followed by swelling and tenderness of the gums (abscess)

Other mouth matters

Diabetics can also experience other oral health problems, in addition to periodontal disease, such as:

- Oral infections (pus; pain; white or red patches on gums, tongue, cheeks or roof of mouth; or dark spots or holes in teeth)
- Fungal infections (thrush, ulcers)
- Dry mouth
- Burning sensation in the mouth or on the tongue
- Poor healing

The power of prevention

There is a lot you can do to prevent oral health problems associated with diabetes. Start by keeping your teeth and gums healthy and happy. Practice good oral hygiene at home and visit your dentist regularly. Stop periodontal disease and other oral health challenges in their tracks now!

Statistic: Diabetic patients are three to four times more likely to develop chronic periodontal infections, which, like any other infection in the body, can impair their ability to process and/or utilize insulin.

– American Academy of Periodontology