
DIABETIC DENTAL CARE

How does diabetes affect the gums and mouth?

Possible reasons:

- Bacterial infections
- Narrowing of the blood vessels to the mouth
- Damage to the nerves of the mouth

What are the symptoms of periodontal disease?

- Red, sore, and swollen gums
- Bleeding gums
- Gums pulling away from the teeth so the teeth look long
- Loose or sensitive teeth
- Bad breath
- A bite that feels different
- Dentures that do not fit well

How to keep teeth and gums healthy

- Keep blood sugar as close to normal as possible.
- Use dental floss at least once a day. Flossing helps prevent the buildup of plaque on the teeth. Plaque can harden and grow under the gums and cause problems. Using a sawing motion, gently bring the floss between the teeth, scraping from bottom to top several times.
- Brush the teeth after each meal and snack. Use a soft toothbrush. Turn the bristles against the gum line and brush gently. Use small, circular motions. Brush the front, back, and top of each tooth.
- Keep dentures clean.
- Ask the person who cleans your teeth to show you the best way to brush and floss the teeth and gums.
- Call the dentist right away if there are any problems with your teeth and gums.
- Have your teeth and gums cleaned and checked by the dentist twice a year.
- Be sure the dentist knows that you have diabetes.
- Quit smoking if you smoke.

People with diabetes should have dental checkups at least every six months, or more often if their dentist recommends it.