

## The Diabetes-Gum Disease Connection

If you have diabetes, it's important to take good care of your teeth and gums. Why? Gum disease can make your diabetic condition worse. And if you don't have diabetes, good dental care can lower your chances of developing periodontal (gum) diseases. What's the connection? Research suggests that the relationship between gum disease and diabetes is a two-way street. One disease impacts the other. Over time, it can become a vicious cycle.

Because diabetes reduces the body's ability to fight infection, the gums are likely to be affected. Periodontal (gum) disease is an infection of the gum and bone. People with uncontrolled blood sugar have a tendency to develop periodontal diseases more often and more severely. They're also more likely to lose more teeth than people who have their diabetes under control.

If you do have diabetes, tell your dentist. Be sure to get regular checkups every six months. Remember to brush your teeth gently, at least twice a day, with special attention to the gum line and floss at least once a day.

"Living With Diabetes: Diabetes and Oral Health Problems." American Diabetes Association. <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care/oral-health-and-hygiene/diabetes-and-oral.html>. Accessed 2013.

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