

DIABETIC DENTAL CARE

How does diabetes affect the gums and mouth?

Possible effects:

- 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 treat periodontal disease (periodontitis)

- Non-surgical treatment
 - Scaling—removes tartar and bacteria from underneath the gums
 - Root Planing—smoothes down the surfaces of the teeth's roots where germs gather
 - Antibiotics—the effectiveness of antibiotics in treating periodontitis is still in debate, but may help treat this disease.
- Surgical treatment
 - Flap surgery—a small amount of the gum is removed to make planing and scaling easier
 - Soft tissue grafts—damaged tissue along the gum line is

replaced with tissue from the palate

- Bone grafts—if the tooth root has decayed, this procedure may help regenerate it so that it does not loosen

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.