

# Diabetes and oral health



Diabetes can weaken the cells that fight infections. This affects your whole body - including your mouth. High blood sugar can lead to an increased risk of oral health problems.



## Diabetes can affect your mouth by:

Reducing the amount of spit, which can lead to cavities because the spit is not helping wash away bacteria that cause cavities.

Increasing the healing time of small cuts or sores inside your mouth by upsetting the natural healing process.

- Can lead to infections and the feeling that gums are irritated and sensitive.
- Results in an increased inflammatory response.



## Diabetes can lead to gingivitis and periodontitis, both forms of gum disease:

If the sugar level is high in your blood, it is high in your saliva, too. Bacteria in our mouths use sugar as food.

It is harder for our bodies to fight the harmful bacteria that cause gum disease.

- Gum disease is the loss of the gums and bone that hold your teeth in your mouth.
- Gum disease can lead to tooth loss.

Poor blood sugar control can lead to more serious gum disease. Serious gum disease can also cause your blood sugar to rise, making diabetes harder to control with increased infection risks.



## You can work with your dentist to manage diabetes-related issues:

- Regular dental visits are important if you have diabetes. Make a plan with a dentist to determine how often you should go in for cleanings, checkups, and x-rays.
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day with fluoridated toothpaste and floss your teeth once a day.
- See your dentist if your gums are red, swollen, or bleed easily; which can be signs of gum disease.
- Use your diabetes medication and follow a nutrition plan as directed by your medical doctor to control your blood sugar levels.
- Treating gum disease may help lower blood sugar levels and slow down the progression of disease.



### Resources:

<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/all-topics-a-z/diabetes>

<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/diabetes-complications/diabetes-and-oral-health.html>

<https://diabetes.org/health-wellness/keeping-your-mouth-healthy>



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