



Diabetes and your mouth



More than 38 million Americans have diabetes.¹ This prevalent systemic disease affects more than your blood sugar — it can also have serious consequences for your dental health. For instance, diabetes puts you at risk for gum disease due to elevated levels of glucose in your saliva.

In addition to brushing your teeth twice daily and visiting your dentist regularly, here are important tips for protecting your teeth and gums while living with diabetes.

Protect yourself

Tell your dentist. It's important that your care team is aware you have diabetes. Tell them if you are experiencing low blood sugar levels, when your last episode was and how often episodes occur.

Consult your doctor before any oral procedure. If your dentist determines you need oral surgery, it is vital that they communicate with your doctor about your condition. Your dentist can prescribe pre-surgical antibiotics and give you dietary recommendations.

Schedule teeth and gum cleanings. Diabetes and the medicines used to treat it can reduce your saliva levels, affecting your ability to fight bacteria on your teeth and gums. Dental cleanings remove plaque that at-home care cannot. If left on teeth and gums, this buildup can cause cavities or gum disease.

Look for warning signs

See your dentist if you experience any of these symptoms.

- Red, tender or swollen gums
- Bleeding gums
- Gums that separate from surrounding teeth
- Chronic bad breath or bad taste in your mouth
- Teeth that are loose or separating from each other

¹ National Diabetes Statistics Report, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/php/data-research/index.html>

