

Oral Health and Diabetes



When blood glucose levels increase, the risk of gum disease and tooth loss appear to rise. The higher blood glucose levels reduce the body's ability to fight infection, making the person with diabetes more prone to bacterial, viral or fungal infections in the mouth. Higher levels of glucose in the saliva promote the growth of plaque, which is the major cause of gum disease. In addition to controlling blood glucose levels, these oral care tips for people with diabetes can help to ensure the healthiest mouth possible.

Daily oral care tips for natural teeth

- Brush teeth twice a day.
- Floss teeth once a day.
- Clean cheeks, tongue and roof of the mouth with a soft toothbrush at least once a day.

Common oral problems

Dry mouth

- Some medications can make the mouth very dry.
- Use moisturizing products available in a pharmacy to ease the dryness.

Mild gum infection (gingivitis)

- A sign of gingivitis is tender, swollen, red gums that may bleed easily.
- Consult an oral health professional, and have daily brushing routines assessed.

Visits to the oral health professional

- The oral health professional will customize the home care plan for the person with diabetes.
- More frequent check-ups may be required in order to maintain optimal oral health.

Daily denture care

- Remove dentures at night. Place a face cloth in the sink to prevent breakage if the denture is dropped. Scrub them, then place dentures in a cup with warm water overnight.
- Clean cheeks, tongue and roof of the mouth with a soft toothbrush at least once a day.
- Dentures should be labelled with the owner's name. A dentist or denturist can provide this service.
- Regularly monitor the dentures for fit. Full or partial dentures that are loose can prevent proper chewing and could be accidentally swallowed.

For more information about oral health, please visit
halton.ca/oralhealth