How does diabetes affect dental treatment?

Diabetes, particularly if poorly controlled, can complicate certain kinds of dental treatment, such as oral surgery. If you have diabetes:

- remind your dentist that you have diabetes
- eat before your dental visit as normal so your blood sugar is within the normal range
- take your usual medications
- talk to your dentist or hygienist about gum disease and whether it is a potential problem for you and your overall health
- plan for your eating needs after surgery. If you're having dental work that may leave the mouth sore, plan to eat soft or liquid foods that will allow you to eat without pain.

Diabetes can delay healing and increase the risk of infection. Also, blood sugar levels may be harder to control after oral surgery. Your dentist should consult with your physician about whether you need to adjust your diabetes medications or take an antibiotic to prevent infection before surgery.

Good oral health may improve diabetes control

Recent research has suggested that treatment for periodontitis in people with diabetes may lead to improvements in diabetes control.[2] This suggests that maintaining a healthy mouth and healthy gums may help with diabetes control.

People with diabetes should work with their dental professional to maintain a high standard of oral hygiene and keep their mouth healthy.

Tips for good oral health if you have diabetes

- Maintain good oral hygiene and visit a dental professional regularly
- Make healthy food choices
- Maintain good diabetes control (work with your doctor to achieve this)
- Don't smoke

4 steps to help prevent gum disease, good oral hygiene is essential

1. Brush twice daily for at least 2 minutes each time with a soft bristle brush
2. Use a fluoridated toothpaste with antibacterial and/or anti-inflammatory properties
3. Clean between the teeth everyday, with floss or an inter-dental toothbrush
4. Visit your dentist regularly

References
1. Mealey BL, Ocampo GL. Diabetes mellitus and periodontal disease. Periodontol 2000 2007; 44:127-153.
2. Taylor GW, Borgnakke WS. Periodontal disease: associations with diabetes, glycemic control and complications. Oral Dis 2008;14:191-203.

DIABETES AND PERIODONTITIS

What you should know about diabetes and the health of your gums

Colgate *YOUR PARTNER IN ORAL HEALTH*

Colgate *YOUR PARTNER IN ORAL HEALTH*

Diabetes can increase the risk of developing gum problems

Research has shown that people with poor diabetes control are 2 times more likely to develop a form of gum disease called periodontitis compared to people who do not have diabetes[1]. On the other hand, people with good diabetes control are not at increased risk for developing periodontitis.

How to recognise whether you have gum disease

There are two main forms of gum disease: gingivitis and periodontitis.

- **Gingivitis** is gum inflammation and is caused by a build up of plaque on the teeth at the point where the tooth and gum meet. The bacteria in plaque cause the gums to become inflamed, and the gums look red and swollen and may bleed when you brush your teeth.

- **Periodontitis** is a more severe form of gum disease, and usually develops after several years. The gums recede (making the teeth look longer), the bone that holds the teeth in place is gradually destroyed, and the teeth may start to become loose.

In most cases, gingivitis and periodontitis do not cause any pain, so many people are unaware they have a problem with their gums until it is diagnosed by a dentist.

Why does diabetes increase the risk for gum problems?

Poor diabetes control can result in more inflammation in the gums when plaque builds up on the teeth. This increases the breakdown of the tissues that hold the teeth in place, leading to more advanced periodontitis.[1]

I have a problem with my gums: what should I do?

If you have a problem with your gums, you should speak to your dental professional about the best way to manage your condition. Most cases of gingivitis are reversible with improved oral hygiene and dental cleaning by a dentist or dental hygienist.

In periodontitis, the tissue damage that occurs cannot usually be reversed, and the aim of treatment is to prevent further damage. Your dentist will be able to advise on the best treatment approach for you, and tooth cleaning may need to be carried out on a regular basis by your dentist or dental hygienist.

The key to success in treatment of gum disease is for you to work hard to maintain a high standard of oral hygiene to remove plaque every day, and your dental professional will be able to advise you on this.

Tips for keeping your mouth healthy

- Brush your teeth thoroughly twice a day to remove bacterial plaque from teeth which helps preventing and treating gingivitis and periodontitis.
- Clean between the teeth at least once a day with floss or inter-dental brushes to remove bacterial plaque
- Use a fluoridated toothpaste with antibacterial and/or anti-inflammatory properties.
- See your dentist and dental hygienist on a regular basis so they can check the health of your teeth and gums and treat any problems early before they become too advanced.
- Smoking makes many oral problems worse. So, if you do smoke, ask about help with quitting.

Can periodontitis make diabetes worse?

We already know that poorly controlled diabetes can increase the risk of periodontitis. There is also research which has shown that periodontitis can make diabetes control more difficult. This is likely because inflammation of the gums can reduce the action of insulin, leading to more difficulty in controlling blood sugar levels. In other words, Researchers believe that there is a two way relationship between periodontitis and diabetes: diabetes may be associated with the increased occurrence and progression of periodontitis and periodontitis may be associated with poorer glycemic control.[2]