

## Diabetes and Gum Disease

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When you have diabetes, you have an increased risk for developing gum disease. However, looking after your teeth and gums will help prevent gum disease.

Gum disease is caused from a build up of bacteria that forms plaque on the teeth. Over time, plaque can harden into tartar that cannot be removed by brushing. Many people do not know that they have gum disease. It is very common in adults. It is preventable.

Gum disease is also called periodontal disease.

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## How do I know I have gum disease?

The warning signs of gum disease are:

- bleeding, sensitive gums when brushing or flossing
- loose teeth
- bad breath that does not go away
- longer looking teeth that may mean you have receding gums.

Gingivitis is the first step in gum disease. Gingivitis is when the gums are swollen and bleed easily. It is reversible. Make an appointment with your dentist if you think you have gingivitis.

Periodontitis is the second step in gum disease. The gums are swollen around the teeth all of the time. This causes the gums to shrink away from the teeth and plaque to develop below the gum line. Bone and connective tissue begin to wear away and then your teeth can become loose and fall out. Make an appointment with your dentist if you think you have periodontitis.

## Who is at risk for gum disease?

You are at risk for gum disease if you:

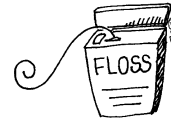
- do not brush or floss your teeth daily
  - smoke
  - have type 1 or type 2 diabetes
  - are pregnant
  - do not see a dentist twice a year
  - have a poor diet
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## What can I do to prevent gum disease?

Decreasing the amount of bacteria available in your mouth will help you prevent gum disease.

Here are some ways you can help prevent gum disease:

- floss daily – find a floss that does not get stuck in your teeth or shreds
- brush teeth twice a day and be sure to use a toothpaste with flouride
- replace your toothbrush every 3 months as bacteria builds up on your toothbrush
- aim for good diabetes control:
  - A1C less than 7%
  - fasting blood sugar – 4.0 to 7.0
  - blood sugar 2 hours after meals – 5 to 10
- stop smoking
- see your dentist twice a year



## Can I make changes to my diet to help prevent gum disease?

Yes, having a healthy diet will help prevent gum disease.

Try these suggestions:

- include crunchy raw vegetables and fresh fruit
- Include cheese and yogurts
- limit or avoid juice, pop and sugar sweetened sports drinks
- limit or avoid high sugar foods such as candy, chocolate, fruit roll ups
- if you eat sweets, include them in moderation with a meal, rather than as a snack
- be sure to get enough calcium and vitamin D every day in your diet.

Taking care of your mouth, gums and teeth is an important part of healthy diabetes care.

## **I have no dental coverage. Where can I go to get dental care?**

### **Dental Health Bus**

This bus makes weekly stops around Hamilton and the Hamilton Mountain

Call the City of Hamilton at 905-546-2489 for the schedule

You may also go to the City of Hamilton website, [www.hamilton.ca](http://www.hamilton.ca) and search for Dental Health Bus for the schedule

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