

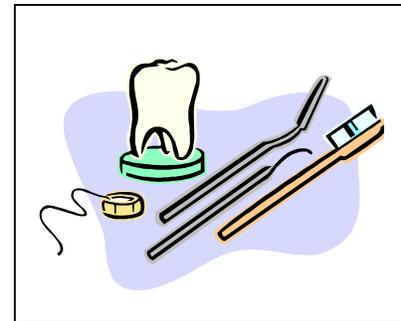


November is American Diabetes Month

Diabetes and your Oral Health

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Diabetes affects over 26 million Americans and can cause complications to our feet, eyes, kidneys and heart. If you have diabetes, did you know that it can also cause complications in your mouth? High glucose levels in saliva may cause bacteria in the mouth to thrive and cause many complications including: tooth decay, fungal infections, salivary dysfunction and dry mouth, periodontal (gum) disease and delayed healing. The first defense against oral complications is to diligently brush and floss every day and see your dental team regularly. If you have bleeding gums, a sore mouth, burning tongue or ulcers, you need to see your dentist for treatment...the earlier the better.



Periodontal disease is an infection of the gum tissue around the teeth, which can lead to loss of bone and teeth if left untreated. Remember, diabetes reduces the body's ability to resist infections and to heal, and infections in the mouth can in turn change your blood glucose levels. You should regularly check your teeth and gums, and immediately schedule an appointment with your dentist if you notice any changes.

So what can you do? Make sure to have regular check-ups and professional cleanings. If you show signs of early gum disease, make sure to follow your dental team's recommendations. If you wear dentures, remove and clean them daily. Also report any changes you have in medications or blood glucose control, and know your glucose levels at the beginning of your dental appointment to help avoid an emergency situation while you are being treated. Let your dentist know if you wear an insulin pump prior to having x-rays. Also, discuss any oral problems you may be having, including dry mouth. People with diabetes have special needs, and your dentist and hygienist are equipped to meet those needs – with your help.

Living with diabetes can be challenging, so taking an active part in your oral health care will help you to have a healthy mouth and a beautiful smile for years to come. Make your dental team part of your diabetes care team.