



Diabetes & Periodontal Disease

An Increased Risk

When you have diabetes, you may be at greater risk for periodontal disease. This disease is an infection of the gums and tissues supporting the teeth. Any periodontal disease you may develop can be more severe and harder to control. Preventing or controlling periodontal disease needs ongoing care. Untreated or uncontrolled periodontal disease may make it harder to control your diabetes.

What causes gum infections?

Bacteria in your mouth form a sticky, whitish film (plaque) on teeth. If plaque is not removed daily, it can harden into a rough yellow or brown deposit (tartar). Tartar is harder to remove from your teeth than plaque. Bacteria from plaque and tartar can cause swollen, bleeding, infected, and receding gums. Without proper treatment, severe gum and bone disease may occur.

Prevention

Removing plaque and tartar from teeth daily helps keep the gums healthy. Follow the guidelines below to help prevent periodontal disease:

- Use good oral hygiene. Brush your teeth after each meal and floss daily. Don't forget to also brush your tongue. Your dentist may suggest special aids to help keep your teeth clean.
- See your dentist regularly. Your dentist may want to see you every 3 to 4 months for exams and cleanings. How often you visit your dentist will depend on how severe your periodontal disease is. It may also depend on your plaque and tartar buildup, and how well you care for your teeth and gums. Tell your dentist if you have any problems controlling your blood sugar.
- Control your blood sugar. Keeping your blood sugar at a healthy level will help control your diabetes. Doing so will also help your body fight infections and may lessen the severity of your periodontal disease. Take your diabetes medicine as instructed.

Treatment

If you have periodontal disease, your dentist may suggest any of the treatment plans below:

- **Scaling and root planing.** These techniques remove plaque and tartar from teeth, above and below the gumline. Scaling and root planing also help control gum and bone disease.
- **Antibiotics.** Antibiotics are medicines that kill bacteria. You may receive antibiotics as pills. Or the medicine may be applied to the area in topical form.
- **Gum surgery.** Gum surgery is a way to remove all deep deposits of plaque and tartar. It may be done for advanced infections that don't respond to other types of treatments.



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