

Oral Health & Diabetes

How does diabetes affect oral health?

Diabetes affects oral health in several ways:

- High blood sugar increases the risk for infections.
- Infections make it harder to control blood sugar.
- High blood sugar or uncontrolled diabetes promotes the growth of bacteria that can cause gum diseases.
- Dry mouth is common in people with diabetes and can lead to cavities.

Oral symptoms of diabetes:

- Dry mouth
- Burning sensation or painful white patches in the mouth
- Delayed healing
- Increased rate and severity of infections



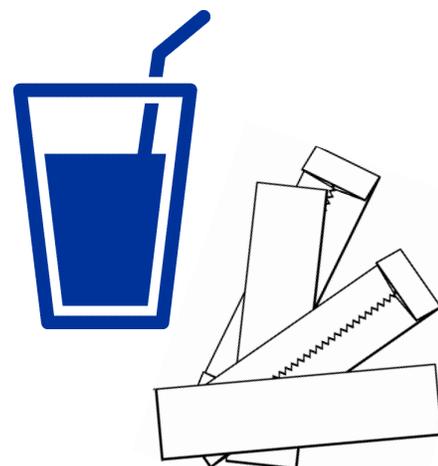
People with diabetes are at higher risk of gum diseases.

Gingivitis causes the gums to become red, swollen, and bleed easily.

Periodontitis occurs when plaque grows below the gum line and irritates the gums. The teeth and gums separate, which causes the tissues and bones to break down around the mouth. This can lead to tooth loss.

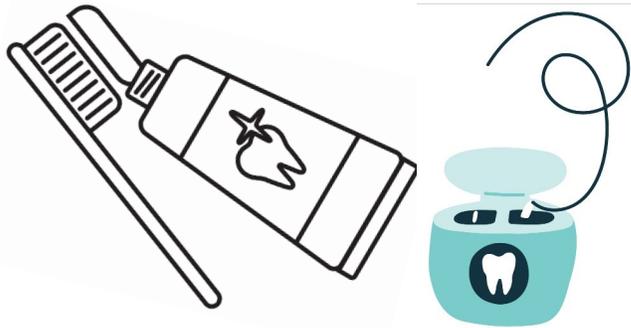
Tips to relieve dry mouth:

- Talk to your medical provider about managing diabetes and the medications that you take.
- Sip water or sugarless drinks often.
- Chew sugarless gum to increase saliva production.
- Avoid spicy or salty foods.
- Avoid drinking caffeine.
- Avoid alcohol and commercial tobacco products.



How to maintain good oral health with diabetes:

- Brush your teeth twice per day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss daily.
- Visit your dental provider for regular check-ups and tell them if you have diabetes.
- Avoid commercial tobacco use.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Monitor your blood sugar level and take your medications as directed.
- Check your mouth regularly for any problems.



Oral health & diabetes matter!

- Research suggests people with periodontitis may be at higher risk of developing diabetes.
- In the United States, more than 37 million adults have diabetes, and 1 in 5 of them are not aware they have it.¹
- In Wisconsin, 58.9% of people with diabetes reported having at least one permanent tooth extracted due to tooth decay or gum disease compared to 33.2% of those without diabetes.²



For more information, please visit the Wisconsin Oral Health Program's website: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/oral-health.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). *What Is Diabetes*. <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/diabetes.html>

2. Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Behavioral Risk Factor Survey 2020.