

Diabetes and Periodontal (Gum) Disease

DID YOU KNOW DIABETES CAN CONTRIBUTE TO TOOTH LOSS?

If you are an adult with type 1 or type 2 diabetes and your blood sugar control is sometimes not as good as your doctor or nurse wants it to be, you can lose some or all of your teeth from a serious type of gum infection called periodontal disease. Diabetes may lower your ability to fight the germs that cause periodontal (gum) disease.

WHAT IS PERIODONTAL DISEASE AND WHY DOES IT HAVE TO BE DIAGNOSED AND TREATED?

Periodontal or gum disease is a serious gum infection that can lead to tooth loss and might prevent you from achieving the nutritional goals set by your doctor or diabetes educator. If not detected by a dentist or hygienist or if left untreated, periodontal disease can cause an infection that destroys the bone supporting your teeth. As the gum disease progresses, symptoms might include tooth loosening or shifting, bad breath, or bleeding gums. Periodontal disease can worsen blood glucose control and vice versa.

If your blood glucose is high or fluctuates, you are at risk of developing severe periodontal disease.



Symptoms:

- Red and swollen gums.
- Gums that bleed are not healthy. Even if your gums bleed only when you brush too hard, ANY sign of bleeding is not normal.
- White or yellow pus around gums.
- Teeth that are longer and gums that have pulled away from teeth.



Please answer “yes” or “no” to the following questions to determine your risk of periodontal disease:

1. Have you ever noticed blood (red) on your toothbrush, on your food, or in your saliva?
2. Do you have any loose teeth or teeth that have shifted on their own?
3. Have you ever been told you had gum disease or had a tooth pulled because of gum disease?
4. Do you use any tobacco products?
5. Has it been over two years since you last saw a dentist?
6. Is your hemoglobin A1c level greater than 7.0?

One or more responses of “yes” warrants a dental examination for periodontal disease. With proper oral hygiene and regular dental visits, periodontal disease is preventable. So visit your dentist and dental hygienist regularly to help prevent periodontal disease!