

Did You Know...?

Persons with diabetes ** are three times as likely to develop periodontal disease, are at greater risk of losing teeth and have a harder time controlling their blood sugar.



For Oral Health Professionals

Diabetes and Oral Health

Connections between diabetes and oral health are not always well known...

- Screen patients to identify barriers to good oral health including: lack of knowledge about diabetes connection to oral health, lack of dental benefits, anxiety about dental procedures, cost concerns and embarrassment about ability to pay, transportation problems, denture wearer (no perceived need).
- Ask about a person's diabetic health on the medical history and know their A1c level (a reading of 6.5 or more indicates a value in the diabetes range).
- Oral blood samples from pockets of periodontal inflammation can be used to measure hemoglobin A1c, an important gauge of a person's diabetes status.
- Look for signs of xerostomia (dry mouth), increased tissue inflammation, increased dental decay, candidal infection, persistent bad breath.
- Ask to be a part of their diabetes management team (they may not see you as part of their overall health care team).

Help Your Patient Make the Connections...

- Ask about their concerns and barriers to care.
- Troubleshoot obstacles (e.g., payment plans, work with medical case managers, work with their abilities and personal goals).
- Establish trust and gain confidence.
- Explain connections between oral health and blood glucose results.
- Educate on reasons for proper home care techniques: use of electric toothbrushes, fluorides and saliva enhancers.
- Have diabetes specific materials available in waiting and treatment areas.
- Collaborate with the patient on treatment goals and their plan.
- Ask permission to speak to the primary care provider and to be a part of the diabetes management team.
- Always follow up at the next visit on successes and problems.
- Explain risks of non-adherence.

References : www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/02/120213133707.htm ; Working Together to Manage Diabetes-NDEP May 2007; Guidelines on Oral Health with People with Diabetes-International Diabetes Foundation 2009; MDCH Diabetes and Oral Health Fact Sheet 2011

** *Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or use insulin properly. Insulin is a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy that is needed for proper bodily functioning.*