

## Diabetes & Periodontal Disease

People more often have gum disease with poor blood sugar levels. They also lose more teeth than a person with good diabetic control. The best protection against periodontal disease is good diabetic control.

- **Blood Vessel Changes:** Diabetes causes the blood vessels to thicken. This slows the flow of nutrients and removal of wastes. The gums and bone tissue then become less resistant to infection.
- **Bacteria:** The sugar linked to diabetes is glucose. Many bacteria thrive on sugar. High levels of glucose in the oral fluids may help the germs grow, initiating gum disease.
- **Smoking:** Cancer and heart disease are among the well known harmful effects of smoking. Studies show that if you smoke, the chances of developing gum disease increase. Smokers are 5 times more likely to have gum disease than nonsmokers. If you have diabetes, smoke, and are age 45 or older, the risk is twenty times greater.

### If You Have Diabetes...

- You need to know how well your diabetes is controlled, and tell your dentist at every visit.
- Before you schedule treatment for periodontal disease, see your doctor. Make sure your doctor and dentist talk about your overall health before the treatment begins.
- Eat and take medication on your normal schedule, unless otherwise advised by your dentist.
- Avoid foods like hot and spicy foods and sharp, crunchy foods that could irritate or cut your mouth.
- Acute infections should be treated right away. However, if you are not in good control of your blood sugar, postpone non-emergency procedures.

Periodontal or oral surgery can usually be done in the dentist office if the diabetes is controlled. The healing may take more time, but with good dental and medical care, post-surgery problems are not more likely than for someone with out diabetes.

It is often easier to control blood sugar levels once the periodontal infection has been successfully treated.

### Other Dental Concerns:

1. Dental decay – Diabetics who regulate their diet often have fewer cavities because they do not eat as much sugar.
2. Fungal infection – Oral fungus thrives on high glucose levels in saliva.
3. Dry mouth – Dry mouth is often a sign of undetected diabetes. Dry mouth can lead to oral sores, infection, and tooth decay. Good blood glucose control can help relieve dry mouth.
4. Dentures- Chewing may be sensitive due to sore gums caused by diabetes.

**The best defense against diabetes is good blood sugar control combined with daily brushing and flossing, and regular visits to our office.**