

DIABETES AND ORAL CARE

Do you have diabetes? Do you know if you are pre-diabetic? Did you know that what is happening in your mouth can affect other parts of your body?

Good oral care is especially important for people with diabetes. It is also important for people who might be prediabetic.

Our mouths are full of bacteria. The bacteria, little bits of food and our saliva make up something called plaque that sticks on teeth. Brushing and flossing helps to get rid of plaque. Plaque that is not removed can harden and form tartar on teeth. Just brushing can't get rid of tartar. Only your dentist or dental hygienist can remove tartar with a cleaning at the dentist's office.

Tartar has bacteria in it and if it's not cleaned away it can cause gum disease. Why is this important? Gum disease is an infection in your mouth. An infection in your mouth can signal or "talk to" other parts of your body so that they act differently. Your blood sugar is one of the things that could be affected. If you have gum disease it could be harder to control your blood sugar.

The American Diabetes Association estimates that 14.6 million Americans have been diagnosed with diabetes. 6.2 million people are undiagnosed and 54 million people are pre-diabetic. Are you one of them? Help take control of your own health by following these 5 tips.

SO, HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU STAY HEALTHY:

- Brush your teeth twice a day - for 3 minutes (put on your favorite song and brush away!).
- Floss every day.
- Have regular dental visits. Lowering the bacteria from gum disease may mean that you will need less insulin to control your blood sugar levels. Some people who do not have diabetes but have gum disease might be more likely to get diabetes. These people with "prediabetes" may become healthier if treated for gum disease too.
- Follow a good diet.
- Exercise more.

Use the [Find a Dentist tool on DentaQuest.com](#) to find a provider near you or call member services at 1-888-912-3456.