

Facts on Diabetes and Oral Health

The Oral Health Self-Management Program

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Bureau of Chronic Disease Control - Missouri Diabetes Control Program

Missouri Oral Health Program

The Oral Health and Diabetes Link

- **High blood glucose can cause problems with your teeth and gums.**
- **Like all infections, dental infections can make your blood glucose go up. Sore, swollen, and red gums that bleed when you brush your teeth are a sign of a dental problem called gingivitis. Another problem, called periodontitis, happens if gingivitis is left untreated.**
- **Gum infections have been called “the sixth complication of diabetes,” because people with diabetes are more likely to have periodontal disease.**
- **The severity of periodontal (gum) disease is also usually greater among persons with diabetes.**

Oral Hygiene and Regular Dental Care

- **Brush your teeth at least twice a day to prevent gum disease and tooth loss. Be sure to brush before you go to sleep.**
- **Use a soft toothbrush and tooth paste with fluoride. Get a new toothbrush at least every 3 months.**
- **Besides brushing, you need to floss between your teeth each day to help remove plaque, a film that forms on teeth and can cause tooth problems.**
- **Get your teeth cleaned and checked at your dentist’s office at least every six months. Each time you make a visit, remind your dentist that you have diabetes.**
- **See your dentist right away if you have signs of dental disease, including bad breath, a bad taste in your mouth, bleeding or sore gums, red or swollen gums, sore or loose teeth, or trouble chewing.**

References:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Prevention and Treatment of Complications of Diabetes: A Guide for Primary Care Practitioners. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Division of Diabetes Translation. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Govt., 1991.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Take Charge of Your Diabetes. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Division of Diabetes Translation. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Govt., 1997.

Alternate forms of this publication for persons with disabilities may be obtained by contacting the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services, Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, PO Box 570, Jefferson City, MO 65102, (573) 522-2861. Hearing impaired citizens telephone 1-800-735-2966. EEO/AAP services provided on a non-discriminatory basis.

Diabetes Oral Care Instructions

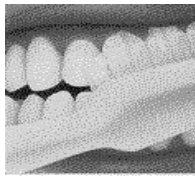
Good tooth and gum care consists of daily brushing, flossing and regular visits to your dentist. As a diabetic, you have a higher chance of getting periodontitis (gum disease) and tooth loss, so it is important that you follow the steps below. Remember that a normal blood sugar level also will help keep your teeth and gums in good health!

Step 1: Chew a Disclosing Tablet

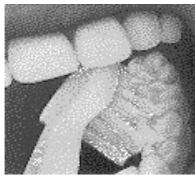
- **A** Disclosing Tablet is used to spot plaque (PLAK) on your teeth. Plaque is a sticky substance full of germs that can harden and cause problems with your teeth and gums.
- **C**hewing a Disclosing Tablet should be done only once or twice until you are familiar with the areas in your mouth that need cleaning the most.
- **A**fter brushing your teeth, chew 1 Disclosing Tablet and swish it around your mouth for 30 seconds. *DO NOT SWALLOW!* Spit the liquid out into a sink. Rinse out your mouth with plain water at least once.
- **L**ook in a mirror to see the **DARK RED** color on your teeth. This shows where you need to brush your teeth better to get rid of plaque. The red color will go away soon, but use the Disclosing Tablet at night so the color is gone by morning.

Step 2: Brush Your Teeth

- **B**rush after each meal and before bed (at least 2 *times* a day).
- **W**ith a soft toothbrush, brush the front, top and back of each tooth, as shown in the pictures below. Brush gently and use small, circular motions. Do not forget to brush your tongue! Brush for at least 2 to 3 minutes.



Brush the front of your teeth!



Brush the top of each tooth!

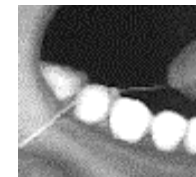


Brush the back of each tooth!

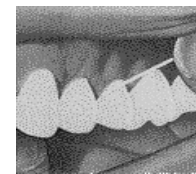
Step 3: Floss Between Your Teeth

- **U**se dental floss at least 1 *time* a day.
- **C**ut off 12 inches of floss (the length between your elbow to your fingertips). Lightly wind most of the floss around your middle finger of one hand. Then wind the left-over floss around the middle finger of the other hand.

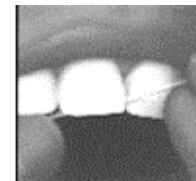
- **F**loss upper teeth by holding floss between thumb and forefinger of each hand. Move floss back and forth gently between the teeth as shown in the pictures below; then slide floss up and down, first on one side of the tooth, and then on the other side of the tooth. Do this on all upper teeth.
- **A**s floss becomes dirty or worn, unwind a bit of the floss from one middle finger and take up the slack by winding the floss onto your other middle finger.
- **R**epeat this with bottom teeth. Do not forget to floss the backside of the last upper tooth and the last bottom tooth on both sides of your mouth.



Move floss back and forth gently!



Slide floss up and down!



First on one side and then the other!