



# Diabetes & Oral Health

Because symptoms of diabetes may be subtle, many people with this disease aren't aware they have it. About one third of people with diabetes have not been tested or diagnosed with the disease.

Dentists could play an important role in helping correct this, according to an article in the *Journal of Periodontal Research*. Because of high glucose levels, people with diabetes often have problems with their teeth and gums as increased glucose helps bacteria thrive. In addition to gum disease, diabetes also makes people more susceptible to:

- Cavities, sore or loose teeth
- Fungal mouth infections
- Mouth ulcers and dry mouth

People with diabetes who have good control of their blood sugar are less apt to develop these, and other oral health problems.

More than 160 different diseases may be detected early through an oral exam, including diabetes. Your dentist may also ask you questions about your family and personal medical history during your regular, dental check up.

If you are a patient with serious periodontal (gum) disease, or if you have a family history of diabetes, your dentist may steer you to visit your regular doctor for more help.

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“Diabetes in the Dental Office: Using NHANES III to Estimate the Probability of Undiagnosed Disease.” L.N. Borrell et al. *Journal of Periodontal Research*. December 2007, vol. 42, no. 6, pp. 559–65. Abstract: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17956470>. Accessed 2013.

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