



Diabetes & Dentistry YOU

The Diabetic Treatment TEAM: Do You Have One?

Whether you have been diagnosed with diabetes in the last six months or in the last 20 years, what becomes clear very quickly is that there are many facets to this disease that can limit your life and lifestyle. Temptations such as smoking and drinking alcohol suddenly become mortal choices.

Could you have diabetes and not know it?

There are 20.8 million children and adults in the US with diabetes -- and nearly one-third of them (or 6.2 million people) do not know it!

The simplest infections are difficult to overcome. And basic physical abilities such as being able to see clearly, maintain a strong rhythmic heart beat and chew food with a healthy, pain-free set of teeth become blessings not to be taken for granted.

Considered another way, though, you will see that there is more information and support available today than ever before. As such, the diabetic who takes control of her own health and wellbeing can not only live a healthy life. She

can flourish!

You may already know and be practicing a diabetic care program that was designed by your primary care physician. It very likely addresses the following medical and lifestyle parameters, aimed at helping you maintain normal, healthy blood glucose and cholesterol levels:

- Regular schedule of blood glucose measurement
- Prescribed medication and/or insulin shots
- A regular exercise regimen
- Weight loss targets
- Healthy meal planning

But did you know that care standards, as well as resources to you help you maintain your health, are constantly changing as new information and new treatments become available? And though your doctor is undoubtedly a highly trained and dedicated practitioner, it is possible that he may not be aware of ALL of the latest treatments or expert care providers that are at your disposal. So if you want to be in charge of

your own health and wellbeing, there are three simple things you can and should do for yourself.

Commit fully to your doctor-prescribed treatment and lifestyle program. Your doctor developed this program for you based on your specific needs and abilities. There is no more important first step in maintaining your health than committing and staying committed to your diabetic care program.

Learn all you can about your disease. There are information resources available to you. But this short list will provide a good foundation for you:

- American Diabetes Association web site www.diabetes.org
- "Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes — 2007" http://care.diabetesjournals.org/cgi/content/full/30/suppl_1/S4
- "Heart of Diabetes" program from the American Heart Association <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3044745>
- American Academy of Periodontology <http://www.perio.org/>

Ask your doctor to help you build a diabetic care team made

Diabetes and Oral Health:

Gum disease is common in people with diabetes, and nearly **one-third of diabetics have severe periodontal diseases** with significant loss of attachment between gums and teeth of five millimeters or more.

of up of experts in their field of diabetic care. If you belong to a diabetic center, you may already have access to a team of experts to aid you in the various aspects of medical treatment such as cardiologists specializing in diabetic care, vision care experts and counselors. All coordinated through your primary care doctor.

If you do not belong to such a network, however, that does not mean you do not have access to such a comprehensive care team. It may simply mean that you need to take a more active role in bringing the team together. The ADA recommends that you build a care team by talking it over with your doctor, asking him to refer you directly to other experts for counseling and treatment.

Once you have had that conversation with your doctor,

take it one step further and request that all members of the team consult with one another to ensure all parts of your treatment come together in one fully integrated and up-to-date plan.

For example, if you are planning to have oral surgery to treat periodontal disease (a common complication associated with diabetes), your diabetic dentist would consult directly with your primary care physician to ensure that the medications he has prescribed for you pre and post surgery do not inhibit the success of the procedure. NOTE: There are more than **400 medications** in use today that produce dry mouth, which can be damaging to the gum tissue, including periodontal disease and tooth decay.

You will also need to check with your insurance provider to be sure

they will cover all or some of the cost. Care team consulting can sometimes cost a little more, so be sure to check with your insurance provider.

Take Action. Take Control.

As you can see, maintaining a healthy lifestyle is within your control. While receiving a well-put-together treatment program from your physician is the best first step, the truth is that the real success or failure of your treatment program rests in your hands. So take control of your life and your health by actively communicating changes in your health and blood glucose levels to your primary care physician. Take your doctor-prescribed self-management program seriously. And above all, learn all you can about diabetes and talk to your doctor to find out what experts you need on your care team.

Diabetic Dentists: The Why, What, How About Them

Why is a diabetic dentist important to my treatment ?

Like many parts of your body when you have diabetes, the gums, teeth and bone of your mouth are vulnerable to the effects of diabetes. Microvascular complications decrease healthy, infection fighting nutrients and blood flow to the bone and gums. Dry mouth either directly related to diabetes or one of the many medications to treat diabetes in other parts of the body, inhibits your ability to wash away bacteria and plaque. As a result, periodontal disease, cavities and tooth and bone loss can result.

Having a dentist specifically trained in how to treat diabetic patients is key in preventing short term and long term damage to your mouth, teeth and



gums.

Who is a diabetic dentist?

A diabetic dentist is trained specifically in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of oral health disorders associated with diabetes. Not only do they treat the immediate

issue, they are able to test blood glucose levels and to work in conjunction with your primary care physician understand and manage drug interactions that can adversely affect oral and overall health.

How do I get a diabetic dentist?

Often, medical doctors refer their patients to a diabetic dentist at the first sign of complication, in order to prevent irreversible damage. However, you do not need to wait for a referral from your physician before you see a dentist. You can contact the dental expert of your choosing for a consultation at any time during your diabetic care. <<Is there a place to refer them to —eg, DfD AAP site??>>

Periodontal Disease & Diabetes:

According to the American Academy of Periodontology, diabetics are 2.8 – 3.4 times more likely to contract periodontal disease than are non-diabetics.