



Diabetes & Dentistry & YOU

Are You at Risk for Diabetes? Learn About How Your Dentist Can Help

It's a funny thing about diabetes (in a not so funny way) that most people understand the seriousness of the disease. They understand that, left unchecked, diabetes can affect virtually every part of your body.

In fact, it's affects are so well documented, you may already know the statistics.

- 24 million Americans currently have diabetes.
- Another 57 million are at risk of developing it.
- Diabetes is responsible cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, blindness, degenerative disease of the extremities and delayed wound healing.

When it comes to this terrible, pervasive ailment, **prevention truly is the best medicine.**

It is far better to make changes in your life today to prevent diabetes from taking hold in your body, than it is to try to manage

it's effects once you have been diagnosed.

And of course that means many things from exercising more, to smoking less (or not at all), and eating right.

But did you also know it means taking good care of your oral health?

Studies have shown that the inflammation and infection caused by gum disease often contributes to insulin resistance (the first step toward becoming diabetic). They have also shown that, when diabetics have been treated for oral inflammation, their blood sugar often stabilizes.

The reason is simple.

Inflammation anywhere in the body causes stress on the body. When that happens, your body reacts (or overreacts) creating a spike in insulin. And what can cause inflammation is bacterial infection.

“Oral health and general health are inseparable.”

-U.S. Surgeon General
Dept of Health and Human
Services

Unfortunately, your mouth is in many ways a gateway to your body, where bacteria literally rides in on the food you eat. If your gums and teeth are not healthy and resistant to these microscopic enemies, they can and will dig in under you gum line, creating a growing collection of bacteria. And as that happens, they trigger local and body-wide infection. And, yes, inflammation.

A properly trained dental expert will remove the plaque that is hosting the bacteria. He will probe for and will (very likely) find deepening holes between your gum line and the root of your teeth -- a sure sign of

Did you know?

Periodontal disease has been linked to heart disease, kidney disease and hyperglycemia in diabetic subjects.

advancing periodontal infection. He will treat the immediate infection. He'll remove dead, decaying tissue and scrape away the bacteria. And he will also follow that with antimicrobial treatment.

And, if you are lucky enough (or have done your homework well enough), you will choose a dentist with expertise in diabetic care. These dentists will consult with your doctor (on your approval) to align medications,

medical and dental treatments and counseling to help you get the best possible preventive care possible. And that is how your dentist can help prevent diabetes and/or help you prevent its progression due to systemic inflammation.

Whether you are currently a diabetic or you may be at risk of developing diabetes (as 57 million Americans over 40 are), visit your dentist to keep your mouth and your body healthy.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about dentistry and diabetes:

- Talk to an internist or your primary care physician
- Visit the American Diabetes Association web site www.diabetes.org
- Find a dentist specifically trained in the care of diabetics and pre-diabetics www.dentistryfordiabetics.com



Inflammation & Body Healthy

Why Researchers Say Your Mouth is the Key

you have kidney disease or heart disease.

What does all of that have to do with where oral health begins and ends?

It's interesting how at some point, many people (from patients to clinical instructors) come to believe that oral health ends at the tonsils and systemic health begins on the other side.

The truth is that the health of your mouth is a good indicator for your overall health. A swollen tongue, for example, can be caused by an allergic reaction to something you ate or drank. It can also result from an infection within your body. Or it could be an indicator for something more serious such as strep infection, hypothyroidism, leukemia or a pituitary tumor.

Researchers say that periodontal disease may be telling you that

But there's much more to it. New studies are linking inflammation to a host of "systemic" diseases (diseases that affect the entire body). The idea being that when inflammation occurs anywhere in your body, the body reacts by trying to fight it off. Inflammation can be caused by allergic reaction, bacterial infection, obesity, etc.

If you have a systemic disease, such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease, or you are at risk for one of them, your body may **over-react** to the problem. That in turn may send insulin levels out of healthy ranges, stress vascular pathways and weaken your body's ability to fight infection.

Everything. Because your mouth is one of the most vulnerable areas of your body to bacterial infection. Gum disease, candidiasis and dental caries are but a few of the oral diseases that can trigger inflammation. Inflammation that does not stop at the gum line or the tonsils. Left untreated, it can grow and spread, and shake up your blood sugar. It may trigger the insulin-resistant spiral toward type 2 diabetes. Or (if you are already living with diabetes) it can make it impossible for you to manage your glucose levels.

So if you are at risk for, or living with, diabetes, heart disease or kidney disease, take care of your mouth. And see a dentist regularly.

Oral Health & Treatment:

Gum disease is a predictor of end-stage kidney disease. And periodontal disease has also been linked to higher rates of cardiovascular disease among diabetics.