



Diabetes

& Dentistry YOU

How to Take a Bite Out of Health Care Costs

Is the economy affecting your long-term health?

If you've been noticing the mudslide the economy has become, you're of course not alone. Virtually every person in the United States is painfully aware of the downturn. Whether you've already been hit by it directly or you're just hearing whispers about how your health care may be ravaged, it's time to do something about it.

Impact of Oral Health

According to *DentistryForDiabeticsSM*, an organization focused on addressing unique oral health complications associated with diabetes, oral health can have a significant impact on your overall health.

When your mouth is healthy, your blood glucose is easier to maintain. In fact, studies have shown a direct connection between oral health and glucose management. When

patients with diabetes, who also have periodontal disease, were treated by a certified dentist to remove infection and inflammation, and to reduce "pockets" within the gums -- the patients' blood glucose levels normalized.

That result came with no additional medication or medical treatment whatsoever.

Health Care Costs

Good oral health may also take a healthy bite out of your health care costs. A recent study commissioned by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan found cost savings associated with good oral care.

And when Senior Dental Consultant at Blue Cross Blue Shield Carl Stoel was asked the study's findings meant in real terms, he said, "So far, we've found that when diabetic patients are good dental patients, there's a substantial savings on the medical side."

But that's not all. It's one thing to make those kinds of statements about oral health. It's quite another to put your money where your mouth is.

A study into the impact of good oral health (commissioned by Blue Cross Blue Shield) found **3% to 8% cost savings** associated with serious diabetic complications -- including:

- **Coronary heart disease**
- **Congestive heart failure**
- **Cardiovascular disease**
- **Peripheral vascular disease**
- **Chronic kidney disease.**

It appears Mr. Stoel and his organization are doing just that. Last year, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan began incorporating preventive dental services into some of their

Did you know?

People with uncontrolled diabetes develop periodontal disease up 340% more often than those with good glycemic control.

medical plans.

What's more. The "substantial savings" Stael was referring to was a 3% to 8% cost savings associated with diabetic complications – including coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, cardiovascular disease, peripheral vascular disease, and chronic kidney disease.

Other research findings support that point. A study by Marshfield Medical Research Foundation, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, found that people with **gum disease are 270% more likely to suffer a heart attack** than those with healthy gums. A finding made even more urgent by the fact that two-thirds of all

Did you know?

A 2001 study by the Journal of the American Dental Association found that diabetic subjects developed oral complications at a rate 3-4 times greater than systemically healthy subject. Yet they are less likely to visit the dentist for regular, preventive examinations.

diabetics die of cardiovascular-related issues.

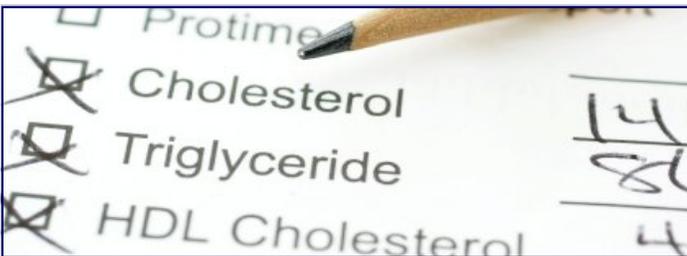
Why be Diligent about Oral Health?

All of which suggests that when you practice diligent oral care, not only can you reduce health care costs. You may also reduce your risk for life-altering and life-threatening complications.

Whether you are concerned about the economy or your long-term health as a person with diabetes, visiting your dentist may be the answer you're looking for.

To find a *DentistryForDiabetics*-certified dentists in your area, visit

www.DentistryForDiabetics.com/directory/index.php.



Both the American Diabetes Association and *DentistryForDiabetics* recommend regular, diligent dental care for individuals with type 1 and type 2 diabetes.

Those care steps include good daily hygiene habits and check ups 2-4 times per year with a dentist certified in the specific oral care needs and unique health risks associated with

diabetes. Check ups should consist of both preventive treatments and oral repair.

In general, you should look for a dentist who includes the following routines and preventive care steps in your oral health program:

- Regularly assesses oral health vulnerability before it reaches advanced stages

Preventive Oral Care What You Should Look For

- Provides rigorous oral care treatment to prevent periodontal disease and soft tissue pathology
- Counsels you on proper oral hygiene
- Supports you with tobacco cessation goals (when needed)
- Works collaboratively with your physician to support your physician-directed management goals

Oral Health & Treatment

For the first time ever, the American Diabetes Association has recommended to the physician that they ask patients when their last dental visit was. If the patient has not seen a dentist in the last, the physician should refer them to a qualified dentist.