



DIABETES AND DENTAL HEALTH

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

Does diabetes affect dental health?

Diabetes increases the risk of dental health problems, such as gingivitis and periodontitis.

How do I know if I have dental problems?

Red, swollen, sore gums that bleed easily may indicate gingivitis. Gums that shrink or pull away from the teeth may indicate periodontitis. You should contact your dentist if you experience these changes or if you have difficulty chewing, loose teeth, bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth. Dental infections can complicate blood sugar control.

What can I do to keep my teeth and gums healthy?

- Control blood sugar levels.
- Brush your teeth at least twice each day, particularly before going to sleep.
- Use a soft-bristled toothbrush; ask your dentist or dental hygienist for recommendations.
- After brushing, rinse your toothbrush and store it upright with bristles at the top.
- Replace your toothbrush at least every three months.
- Floss your teeth every day.
- Have your teeth cleaned and checked at least twice each year.
- If you use insulin, plan your dental appointment so that it does not interfere with meals or put you at risk for low blood sugar.
- Let your dentist know that you have diabetes.

For more Patient Education Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at www.greenwichhospital.org and click on Patient Education