



Queen Mary

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Maintaining good oral health when living with Type 2 Diabetes



A practical guide for people with diabetes to raise their awareness and knowledge of oral health

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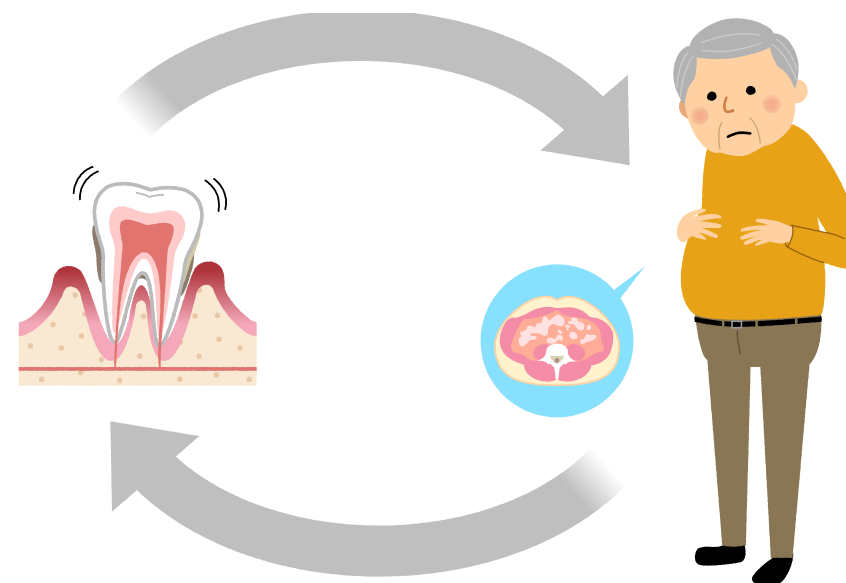
What are the facts?



What are the most common oral health problems with diabetes?

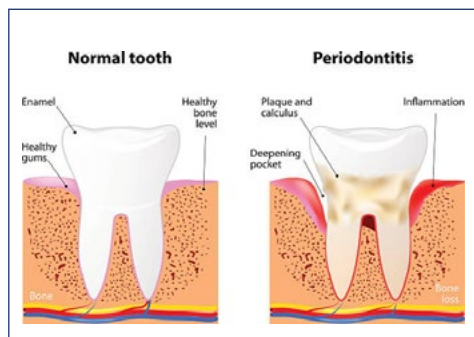
- Periodontal disease (gum and loss of bone in the jaw)
- Lack of saliva, dry mouth
- Tooth decay
- Increased oral mucosal infections (mouth thrush)
- Mouth ulcerations
- Irritation and soreness of the oral mucosa
- Difficulty in wearing dentures due to dryness of oral mucosa
- Taste impairment
- Tooth loss

Regular dental check-ups and early treatment can prevent dental complications.



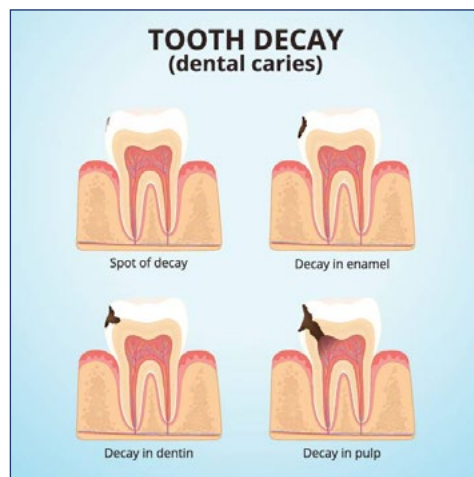
What is the link between gum problems (Periodontitis) and diabetes?

- High blood glucose, especially over a long duration, increases the sugar content in saliva.
- This causes an increase in oral microbes that produce acid.
- The acid then attacks the teeth and gums and can cause infection.
- As a consequence, this infection can destroy the gums and bones around your teeth.



Is there any link between dental decay and dry mouth?

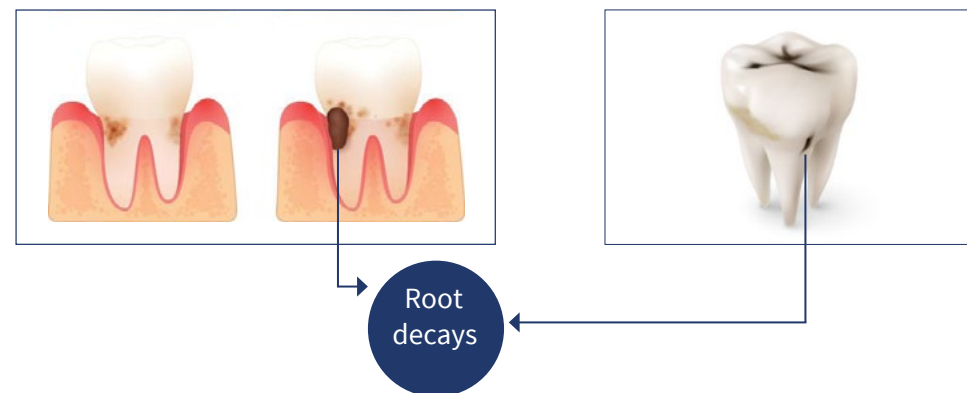
- 20% of the general population experiences 'dry mouth'.
- 30% of women have dry mouth.
- Dry mouth is seen in 50% of the older population.
- Dry mouth can be related to various systemic chronic diseases, diabetes and multiple drug use including antidepressants and some antihypertensive drugs.
- Dryness of the mouth will lead to oral discomfort, difficulty in swallowing and increase the susceptibility to the development of dental decay



- The reduction in saliva would also result in an increased mouth acidity contributing the loss of minerals from the tooth surface.
- As a consequence, dental decay (especially root decay) develops.

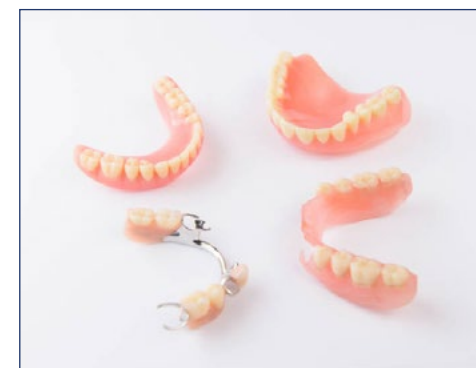
Gum recession and root decay

- Gum recession is common with age and due to gum diseases.
- Root surfaces are then exposed.
- Roots are more prone to decay as they are not strong like the crown part (enamel) of the tooth.
- Dental fillings do not work well on roots due to
 - o the close proximity to the gum
 - o the structure of root surfaces
 - o difficulties in moisture control around roots.



I have dentures, what do I do?

- Saliva as a natural healer maintains a healthy mouth.
- Saliva lubricates the contact areas between your denture and gums.
- If you have dry mouth and dentures, the increased friction from a dry denture can rub your gums and cause soreness.
- This soreness might increase during the day and could adversely affect eating.
- Maintaining good health with compromised blood sugar levels would be challenging.



- Discomfort from dentures can then reduce the quality of life.

Useful tips

- Your dentist should first check the “fit” of your dentures and soft tissues.
- Clean your dentures after each meal.
- If you can, take your dentures out before going to sleep.
- Ask your dentist how to clean your dentures and if there are any additional dental products that can be used to ease dryness and to clean your dentures.

CAUTION. If you wear your dentures continuously without cleaning them, the outcome can unfortunately promote the growth of mouth fungus (yeast-like infection) leading to mouth thrush.



Typical presentation of mouth thrush

New approaches to replace tooth loss

- Replacing tooth loss with dental implants is becoming popular.
- If your blood glucose is well managed, you might speak to your dentist about dental implants.
- Bone levels, previous dental history, smoking and overall oral health must be taken into account and your dentist can advise whether this is an option for you.



Summary messages

- Regular dental care should be part of your diabetes management
- Improvement in your oral health leads to better eating, improved wellbeing and quality of life
- Follow up regular Diabetic Reviews with your GP so that blood sugars are monitored
- Have regular dental check-ups
- Don't ignore symptoms of gum disease and other infections, such as redness, soreness, and bad breath
- Eat a healthy balanced diet
- Effective toothbrushing is important
- Use interdental cleaning aids such as dental floss or interdental brushes (Ask your dentist for advice)
- Clean your dentures daily to control thrush (a fungal infection)
- If you can, take them out at night
- Avoid smoking
- Drink less alcohol
- Make sure dentures fit well and don't make your gums sore
- Ask your dentist to check for ulcers and other problems that can occur with dentures
- Have regular denture maintenance visits to your dentist to avoid any ulcerations
- Talk to your dentist about the things you can do to prevent problems, such as using mouthwash, different toothpastes, and dental varnish



You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them.”

Maya Angelou



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