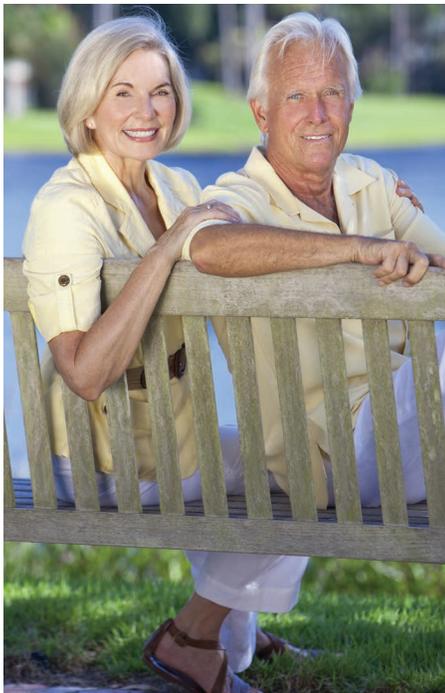




## Overview

When blood sugar is consistently high, germs in the mouth and infections occur more frequently. Problems start with a mixture of food, saliva and germs. Then plaque develops which irritates the gums. When plaque is not removed by brushing, it hardens into tartar. A dentist will need to remove the tartar. Good daily care at home and regular dental checks can prevent these problems.



# Dental care

**OBJECTIVE: Explain how to take care of teeth and gums. Explain signs of dental problems.**

## Important things to remember

1. Brush your teeth at least twice a day and floss once a day.
2. Check your mouth and gums daily for the following problems:
  - Sores
  - Swelling
  - Bleeding
  - Pain
  - Pus around the teeth
  - White or red patches on your gums, tongue, cheeks or roof of your mouth
  - Teeth that hurt when you eat something cold, hot or sweet or when you chew
3. Have regular dental checks at least twice a year. Be sure to tell your dentist that you have diabetes.
4. If you have type 1 diabetes, schedule your dental visits after meals to avoid low a blood sugar.
5. Follow your sick day plan if you have problems with your teeth and gums and are unable to eat. Eat soft foods or drink liquids with sugar.
6. If you smoke or use other tobacco products, stop. Tobacco users are at higher risk for developing gum disease.
7. Fungal infections can develop if your blood sugar runs high. If you are taking antibiotics, you are at higher risk of getting a fungal infection. This type of infection is called thrush. Thrush may appear as white or red patches in the mouth. Sores and ulcers can develop from the patches. Smoking or wearing your dentures all day can also increase your risk for thrush. By keeping blood sugar under control, stopping smoking and taking dentures out at night, you can lower your risk of getting thrush.

Some medicines you take may make your mouth dry. A dry mouth can make you at higher risk for cavities. If dry mouth is a problem, ask your dentist about chewing sugar-free gum.

# QUIZ

## How can your dentist help you?

1. Make sure your dentist knows that you have diabetes.
2. Ask your dentist to recommend the type of toothbrush you should use.
3. Ask your dentist to review with you the proper way to brush and floss your teeth.
4. If you need dental surgery, talk to your doctor and dentist about treatment options. If your diabetes is not well controlled, surgery may need to be delayed. It is important to have your blood sugar controlled before surgery.

## QUESTIONS

1. The two signs of dental problems that you should talk to your dentist about are:
2. How many times per year should you have a dental check up?
  - a) At least 2 times a year
  - b) Once a year
  - c) Only when your teeth hurt
3. If your blood sugar levels are high, what type of infection are you more likely to get?

## ANSWERS

1. sores, swelling
2. a
3. fungal