

# Making the Connection: Oral Health and Diabetes

**M**ore than 25 million children and adults in the United States have diabetes. Of those, seven million are actually unaware of their condition. To top it off, it's estimated that 79 million people have prediabetes, a condition that increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes down the road.<sup>1,2</sup>

So what do these statistics and diabetes have to do with oral health?

Research has found a strong connection between periodontal (gum) disease and diabetes. People with diabetes not only are more likely to have gum disease, but can have a more advanced stage of the condition than those without diabetes.<sup>3</sup> It's important to know that anyone is susceptible, especially pregnant women who are at an increased risk for both gum disease and gestational diabetes due to a change in hormone levels.<sup>4,5</sup>

Unlike gum disease, diabetes is not always preventable. That's why regular dental visits are necessary in helping potential diabetics become aware of the risks and the importance of maintaining good oral health. Proper care of the mouth, including treatment of gum disease, may even help diabetics achieve better blood sugar control.

Understanding the connection between diabetes and gum disease will help you keep your oral and overall health in check.

## *Did you know?*

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*Of the 25 million people with diabetes aged 20 years and older, 13 million are men and 12.6 million are women.<sup>1</sup>*



# Quick bites

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## The following tips can help diabetics better manage their oral and overall health:

- Schedule regular dental cleanings at a frequency recommended by your dentist to help eliminate the source of bacteria associated with periodontal disease.
- Tell your dentist you have diabetes, and remind him or her of the status of your condition at each visit.
- Share your physician's and dentist's contact information so they can discuss proper treatment should an issue arise.
- Practice good oral health habits, such as brushing and flossing regularly and using a daily mouth rinse.



*Visit us online for more information on oral and overall health!*

1 American Diabetes Association, [www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/statistics/](http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/statistics/), accessed Oct 2013.

2 American Diabetes Association, [www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/prediabetes/](http://www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/prediabetes/), accessed Oct 2013.

3 Delta Dental Plans Association, [www.deltadental.com/DentistPerioandDiabetes.pdf](http://www.deltadental.com/DentistPerioandDiabetes.pdf), accessed Oct 2013.

4 American Diabetes Association, [www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/gestational/](http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/gestational/), accessed Oct 2013.

5 American Pregnancy Association. Pregnancy and Swollen Gums (Also known as Pregnancy Gingivitis), [www.americanpregnancy.org/pregnancyhealth/swollengums.html](http://www.americanpregnancy.org/pregnancyhealth/swollengums.html), accessed Oct 2013.

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