



How can I keep a healthy mouth?

Treating gum disease can help lower your blood glucose levels

Visit the dentist and/or dental hygienist regularly.

Tell your dentist if you have diabetes and update them on any changes in the medication you are taking.

Brush your teeth twice a day with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. **Do not rinse after brushing.**

If you smoke, get help to stop. Call Quitline on **8007 3333**.

If your gums are red, swollen or bleed easily, contact your dentist.

For more information, please contact:

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DIABETES AND ORAL HEALTH

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GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
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Health Promotion & Disease
Prevention Directorate



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Diabetes and oral health

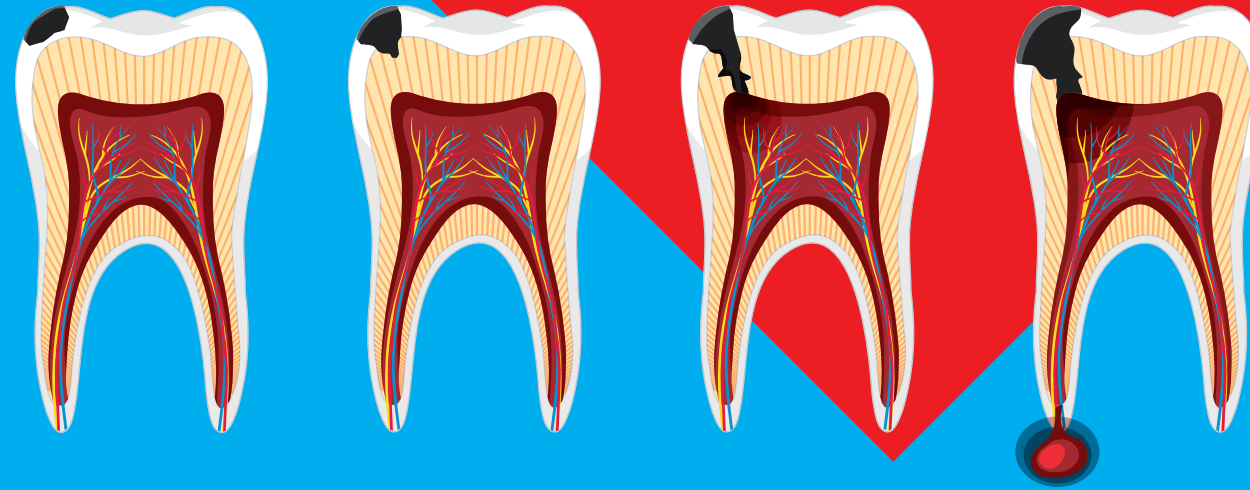
A healthy mouth is important for everyone. However, diabetes can also cause problems in your mouth.

Gum disease (Periodontal)

People with diabetes are more likely to have gum (periodontal) disease – an infection of the gum and bone that keep the teeth in place. 90% of adults suffer from some form of gum disease. Gums that bleed easily, and are red, swollen, tender, or have pulled away from the teeth, indicate some form of gum disease. Gum disease can lead to pain, eating difficulties and tooth loss. People with gum disease have more difficulty controlling blood sugar levels.

Dry mouth (Xerostomia)

People with diabetes might notice a decrease in saliva production (the fluid that keeps your mouth wet), which can cause a dry feeling within the mouth. A dry mouth increases the risk of tooth decay and may also be caused by certain medications. If your mouth is dry, sip water frequently and use non-foaming toothpaste or toothpaste especially formulated for dry mouth. Chewing sugar-free gum helps stimulate salivary flow. Saliva substitutes are also available.



Tooth decay (Dental caries)

Decay of the tooth's root surface can occur more often in people with diabetes. This decay is influenced by factors like gum recession, when your gums pull away from your teeth, exposing the root surfaces making them more susceptible to decay, particularly with a dry mouth.

Delayed or poor healing

When diabetes is poorly controlled, healing following dental treatment may be slower and the risk of infection is increased. The body is less capable of fighting the bacteria which attack the gums, making dental implants more likely to fail due to poor healing.

Smoking further slows down the healing process as it affects circulation of blood in the gums, and this increases the risk of gum disease by 20 times.

Mouth infections

High blood sugar levels can also trigger infections in the mouth, as they weaken the white blood cells, the cells that fight infections. These infections appear as white or red patches and can cause pain and irritation. Likewise, oral infections can make the blood sugar levels difficult to control.