

How to Keep Your Teeth and Gums Healthy

8 Self-Care Tips

1. Follow your diabetes self-management plan to help manage blood glucose, which can help prevent or minimize gum disease and other dental problems.
2. Brush your teeth at least twice a day, in the morning and at night. Ideally, brush after meals and snacks as well.
3. Use a soft-bristled toothbrush and toothpaste that contains fluoride. Avoid vigorous or harsh scrubbing, which can irritate your gums.
4. Get a new toothbrush at least every 3 months or if the toothbrush looks worn.
5. Consider using an electric toothbrush, especially if you have arthritis or other problems that make it difficult to brush well.
6. Floss your teeth at least once a day to help remove plaque between your teeth and under your gum line. Try waxed floss or a floss holder if you have trouble working the floss between your teeth.
7. Schedule regular dental visits. Visit your dentist at least twice a year for professional cleanings and checkups.
8. Don't smoke. Smoking increases the risk of serious diabetes complications, including gum disease. If you smoke, ask your doctor about options to help you quit.

Partner With Your Dentist

- Tell your dentist at each visit what type of diabetes you have, any medications you take, and how your diabetes is treated.
- Make sure your dentist, diabetes educator, and doctor have each other's contact information.
- Follow your dentist's recommendations for professional teeth cleaning (usually every 3-6 months).
- You may want to schedule dental appointments for early in the morning after breakfast to stabilize blood sugar and prevent hypoglycemia.
- Take your normal medicines before your dental visit unless your dentist or doctor tells you differently.
- Follow your normal meal plan after dental work. Plan ahead to make sure you can meet your nutritional needs if you expect to have difficulty chewing.
- Look for and tell your dentist about any signs of gum disease, including redness, swelling, and bleeding gums.
- Tell your dentist about any other symptoms, such as dry mouth, loose teeth, or mouth pain.

Diabetes and Dental Health Resources

- American Dental Association: <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/d/diabetes>
- American Academy of Periodontology: <https://www.perio.org/consumer/gum-disease-and-diabetes.htm>
- American Diabetes Association: www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care/oral-health-and-hygiene/