

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR DIABETES



Healthy Teeth

Did you know that diabetes can harm your teeth and gums? The good news is that you can take steps to help keep your teeth healthy. You've already taken an important step by finding this guide!

Tips to Keep Your Teeth Healthy

- **Get a dental exam once a year or more often if your dentist says you need it. At your exam, your dentist or dental hygienist can:**

- Explain how diabetes affects your teeth and gums and check for problems, like cavities or gum disease.
- Treat any problems you have with your teeth or gums.
- Teach you how to check for signs of gum disease at home (see next page).
- Provide care, like a fluoride treatment, to keep your mouth healthy.
- Tell you how to treat problems, such as dry mouth.

- **Work with your dentist to create a health plan for your teeth.**

- Ask your dentist how to take care of your teeth at home and how often to come in for a dental visit.
- Ask what to do if you start having problems with your teeth or gums.
- Ask your dentist to send your exam results to your other doctors after every visit.
- Be sure to keep your next dentist appointment!



- **Take care of your teeth at home.**

- Brush with a soft-bristled toothbrush two times a day or more.
- Use toothpaste with fluoride and floss once a day.
- Check your mouth for red or swollen gums, bleeding gums, loose teeth, a change in how your bite feels, or bad breath.
- Visit a dentist if you think you have gum disease.
- Limit food and drinks that are high in sugar.



**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention**
National Center for Chronic
Disease Prevention and
Health Promotion



How Can Diabetes Harm Your Teeth?

- Diabetes is linked to gum disease, also known as periodontal disease.
- Gum disease can lead to tooth loss.
- If people who have uncontrolled diabetes get treated for gum disease, their blood sugar will go down over time.

What Are the Signs of Gum Disease?

- Red, swollen, or bleeding gums.
- Gums pulling away from the teeth or sores on the gums.
- Loose teeth or change in bite or tooth position.
- Bad breath.

Manage Your ABCs



Ask your health care team to help you set and reach goals to manage your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol and stop smoking—also known as the ABCs of diabetes.

- **A1C (a measure of your average blood sugar over 3 months):** The goal set for many people is less than 7% for this blood test, but your doctor might set a different goal for you.
- **Blood pressure:** High blood pressure causes heart disease. The goal is less than 140/90 mmHg for most people, but check with your doctor to see what your goal should be.

- **Cholesterol:** LDL or “bad” cholesterol builds up and clogs your blood vessels. HDL or “good” cholesterol helps remove the “bad” cholesterol from your blood vessels. Ask your doctor what your cholesterol numbers should be.
- **Smoking:** If you smoke or use other tobacco products, take steps to quit. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) for support.

Teach your family about your diabetes and the ABCs so they can help you.

Join the millions of Americans learning to manage their diabetes:

Ask your health care provider to refer you to diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services to help you manage your diabetes. Search for [“Find a Diabetes Education Program in Your Area”](#) to go to a website that lists programs recognized by the American Diabetes Association or accredited by the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists.

Visit [CDC’s Diabetes website](#) for information on how to manage your diabetes and live your healthiest life.

