



# Periodontal Disease & Diabetes

For your dental health.

If you have diabetes, you're at a greater risk of suffering from oral infections and diseases, including periodontal disease.

## Why are diabetics at higher risk?

Diabetes frequently causes blood vessels to thicken and become less elastic, which decreases the flow of oxygen and nutrients to the body's tissues and slows the removal of harmful wastes. This can weaken your mouth's resistance to infection.

Also, the bacteria in your mouth that are responsible for periodontal disease thrive on sugars, including glucose, the sugar linked to diabetes. If diabetes isn't controlled properly, high glucose levels in your saliva feed these bacteria and set the stage for gum disease. Interestingly, the reverse is also true; an infection of the gums makes it more difficult for you to control your blood sugar.



*Microscopic view of plaque*



*Plaque causes periodontal disease*

Diabetics who don't successfully control their blood sugar levels often experience a decreased flow of saliva, which can lead to a condition called dry mouth or xerostomia. A lack of moisture in the mouth allows plaque, a sticky film of food residue and bacteria, to build up on teeth. Plaque accumulation is the main cause of periodontal disease, so it's important for everyone, especially diabetics, to remove plaque from their teeth each day by flossing and brushing. If not completely removed every day, plaque builds up and mineralizes to become tartar, which can only be removed by a professional. That's why regular cleanings in our office are so important.

## Preventive measures

To help prevent bacterial infections in your mouth, we may prescribe antibiotics, medicated mouth rinses, and more frequent dental cleanings. With good dental and medical care, your gums and teeth can remain healthy and free of periodontal disease.



*More frequent dental cleanings*