

How can I keep a healthy mouth?



Visit the dentist at least twice a year for a routine check up even if your teeth look and feel fine. Inform your dentist that you are diabetic and give him/her an updated list of the medications you are taking.



Use fluoride toothpaste. Brush your teeth and gums at least twice a day for two minutes. Make sure that you sleep with a clean mouth.



Eat healthy foods. It is important to eat before your dental visit.

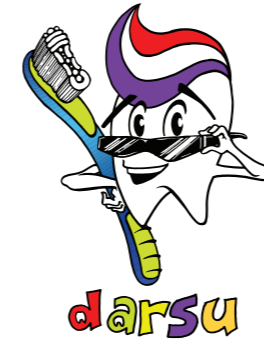


Make sure your diabetes is controlled.



Take your medications as directed by your doctor, even when attending a dental appointment.

Information compiled by **Dental Public Health Unit**



Teeth for life

Information guide for diabetics

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#teeth for life

Diabetes and Your Mouth



ORAL HEALTH

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Diabetes impacts the health and well-being of millions of people worldwide. In Malta, more than 9 out of every 100 people are diabetic.

9% Maltese Population Diabetic

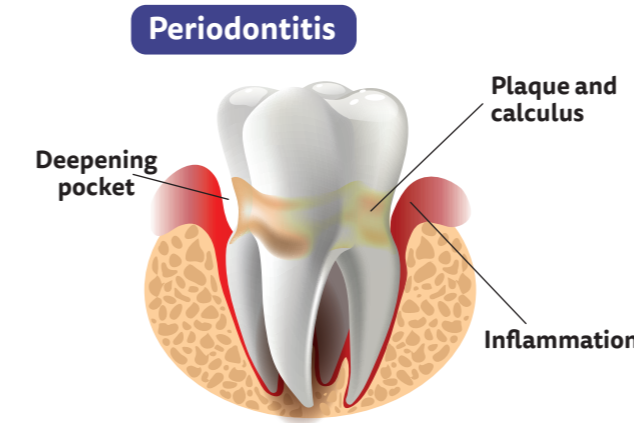
When sugar levels are uncontrolled, overall general health including the health of the mouth is affected. The most common oral health problems associated with diabetes are:

- Gum disease
- Poor healing
- Dry mouth
- Mouth infections

Toothache causes anxiety. This might affect the sugar level in the blood.

Gum disease (periodontal disease)

90% of adults suffer from some form of gum disease at one stage or another throughout their lives. Gums that bleed easily, and are red, swollen, tender or have pulled away from the teeth, indicate some form of gum disease. Research suggests that there is a two way relationship between diabetes and gum disease. People with diabetes are more prone to gum disease. Likewise, the presence of gum disease might make blood sugar control more difficult to achieve.



Poor healing

Evidence suggests that 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. Dental implants are more likely to fail in diabetic patients because of poor healing.

In diabetic people who smoke, the healing process will be slowed down further since smoking decreases the circulation of blood in the gums and this increases the risk of gum disease by 20 times.



Dry mouth (Xerostomia)

Diabetics with high blood sugar levels may also notice that their mouths are dry. 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 intended for dry mouth. Chewing sugar-free gum helps stimulate salivary flow. Saliva substitutes are also available.



Mouth infections

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

