A Healthy Mouth with Diabetes

Whether you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes, managing your blood sugar level is key. With high blood sugar levels comes higher risk of dental problems:

- **Proper Dental Care**
  - **Brush at least twice a day.** Use toothpaste that contains fluoride and a soft-bristled toothbrush. Consider using an electric toothbrush.
  - **Floss at least once a day.** Flossing helps remove plaque between your teeth and under your gumline.
  - **Drink plenty of water.** Water, especially fluoridated water, bathes your teeth in extra protection and washes away harmful bacteria.
  - **Schedule regular dental visits.** Preventing and treating tooth decay and periodontal disease with annual dental cleanings can help improve blood sugar control.

Tooth Decay (cavities)

When starches and sugars in foods and beverages interact with the natural bacteria in your mouth, a sticky film (plaque) forms on your teeth. The higher your blood sugar level, the greater the supply of sugars and starches — and the more acid wearing away at your teeth.

Fungal Infection (thrush)

People with diabetes may be more likely to develop thrush, which is a fungal infection. It produces painful white or red patches inside your mouth.

Gum disease (gingivitis)

Diabetes reduces your ability to fight bacteria. The longer plaque and tartar remain on your teeth, the more they irritate your gums. In time, your gums become swollen and bleed easily. This is known as gingivitis.

Dry mouth (xerostomia)

Some individuals with diabetes have a lack of saliva, known as dry mouth. Without saliva to help protect your teeth, you could be at risk for tooth decay, gum disease, and fungal infections (thrush).

Periodontal disease (periodontitis)

Periodontal (gum) disease causes your gums and jawbone to pull away from your teeth, which can cause your teeth to loosen and possibly fall out. It tends to be more severe and common among those with diabetes.

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Make sure your dentist knows you have diabetes