

FACTSHEET



Periodontal Disease and Diabetes Mellitus

Diabetes mellitus, or diabetes as it is commonly called, is a disease in which unusually high levels of sugar are found in the blood due to the body's inadequate utilization of insulin — a hormone manufactured in the pancreas to produce energy. There are two forms of diabetes: Type 1 and Type 2. People with Type 1 diabetes produce little or no insulin, and those with Type 2 diabetes produce normal or slightly above average amounts of insulin, but the body has grown resistant to its effects, resulting in an insulin shortage.

The link between periodontal disease and diabetes has been well-documented. Studies have found periodontal disease to be more prevalent in diabetics versus non-diabetics. This is probably due to the fact that diabetics are more susceptible to contracting infections. In fact, diabetics lose more teeth than non-diabetics.

Now however, researchers are also finding that periodontal disease may predispose or exacerbate the diabetic condition. In a randomized, controlled trial, periodontal treatment in diabetics showed a reduction in the need for insulin following periodontal treatment of two separate groups of diabetic patients^{1,2}. A longitudinal study of diabetes and periodontal disease found that severe periodontitis may be an important risk factor for the progression of diabetes and physicians should consider the periodontal status of diabetes patients having difficulty with glycemic control³.

The prevalence of diabetes has increased by 75 percent over the past 35 years. According to the Centers for Disease Control, nearly 16 million Americans, 5.9 percent of the population, live with the disease, and 5.4 million are unaware they have the illness. As with the many infection-related complications of diabetes, gum disease is intrinsically linked to poor metabolic control.



The American
Academy of
Periodontology

Suite 800
737 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60611-2690



American Academy of Periodontology

The following information from the AAP Web site is located at:
<http://www.perio.org/consumer/mbc.diabetes.htm>

Diabetes



- Osteoporosis
- Heart Disease and Stroke
- Pregnancy Problems
- Diabetes
- Respiratory Diseases

People with diabetes are more likely to have periodontal disease than people without diabetes, probably because diabetics are more susceptible to contracting infections. In fact, periodontal disease is often considered the sixth complication of diabetes. Those people who don't have their diabetes under control are especially at risk.

A study in the November issue of the *Journal of Periodontology* found that poorly controlled type 2 diabetic patients are more likely to develop periodontal disease than well-controlled diabetics are.

Research has emerged that suggests that the relationship between periodontal disease and diabetes goes both ways - periodontal disease may make it more difficult for people who have diabetes to control their blood sugar.

Severe periodontal disease can increase blood sugar, contributing to increased periods of time when the body functions with a high blood sugar. This puts diabetics at increased risk for diabetic complications. Thus, diabetics who have periodontal disease should be treated to eliminate the periodontal infection.

This recommendation is supported by a study reported in the *Journal of Periodontology* in 1997 involving 113 Pima Indians with both diabetes and periodontal disease. The study found that when their periodontal infections were treated, the management of their diabetes markedly improved.

Find Out More

- [More information from the American Diabetes Association.](#)
- [View a free brochure sample on diabetes and periodontal disease.](#)