

Diabetes and oral health



Diabetes: The mouth-body connection

More than 25 million Americans today have diabetes. And while it's widely known that diabetes can affect the eyes, nerves, kidneys and heart, many people don't know that it can also impact oral health.

If you have diabetes, learn to help keep your smile healthy and bright.

Under the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP), a third cleaning is covered for children and adults with diagnosed type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Talk with your dentist if a third cleaning is beneficial for your oral health care.

Diabetes and oral health are linked

Research shows that people with diabetes are more susceptible to oral health problems, including:

- Oral infections
- Delayed oral healing
- Dry mouth
- Tooth loss and decay
- Gum disease
- Impaired taste
- Burning sensation in the mouth or tongue

Partner with your dentist

It's vital for people with diabetes to seek regular professional dental care. Your dentist will remove bacteria, plaque and tartar from your teeth and may detect early signs of oral disease.

- Choose morning appointments, if possible. Blood glucose levels tend to be under better control at this time of day.
- Let your dentist know that you have diabetes.
- Tell your dentist about any medications you're taking, for diabetes or other reasons.

Learn to recognize gum disease

By combining good dental care along with medical management of blood sugars, diabetics may avoid gum disease. To help catch gum disease early on, contact your dentist if you notice any of the following:

- Red, tender or swollen gums
- Bleeding gums
- Gums that separate from surrounding teeth
- Chronic bad breath or bad taste in your mouth
- Teeth that are loose or separating from each other

Practice preventive care

Establish a good oral health routine to help keep your mouth healthy.

- Seek regular professional dental cleanings and exams.
- Brush teeth with fluoridated toothpaste at least twice a day for two minutes, making sure to brush along the gumline.
- Floss daily to remove plaque between teeth.
- After brushing, rinse vigorously with mouthwash or water.
- Treat dental infections immediately.

You can also boost oral care by choosing a healthy diet. Opt for foods rich in essential nutrients (especially vitamins A and C) and reduce or eliminate sugar and starches. Keep track of blood sugar levels, and carefully follow all instructions from your dentist and physician.

Some information courtesy of the Academy of General Dentistry

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SmileWay® Wellness Program

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TRICARE Retiree Dental Program Contact Information

Program Information and Inquiries

trdp.org



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Check out our wellness resource



The SmileWay Wellness Challenge makes it easy to get smart about your dental health. Visit (and bookmark!) mysmileway.com to take advantage of our oral wellness resources.

Review your habits

Take one or both of our interactive quizzes to see if you are at risk for cavities or gum disease and sign up to receive customized emails based on your risk level.

Get educated

Read articles or view short videos on a variety of dental health-related topics, from acid reflux to X-rays.

Stay informed

Get up-to-date dental health news and tips:

- Sign up for *Grin!*, our fun dental health e-newsletter
- “Like” us on Facebook
- Follow us on Twitter

Questions about oral health?

If you’ve got questions about oral health, visit our **SmileWay Wellness site** for answers. We’ve compiled an extensive library of articles on oral health topics from amalgam fillings to X-rays and just about every oral health topic in between.

Mouth-body connection

- Diabetes and oral health
- Heart disease and oral health
- Men’s and women’s oral health
- Stress and oral health

Preventive care

- Brushing and flossing
- Choosing a toothbrush
- Fighting bad breath
- Fluoride

Emergency care

- Dental care when traveling
- Handling dental emergencies

Kids & teens

- Baby bottle tooth decay
- Children’s oral health
- Teens’ oral health

Seniors

- Dentures
- Seniors’ oral health

Dental treatments

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- Braces
- Dental implants
- Sealants

Conditions

- Dry mouth
- Mouth sores
- Sensitive teeth
- TMJ

Nutrition

- Diet and diabetes
- Snacking on the go
- Vegetarian diet
- What to eat to keep your teeth

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