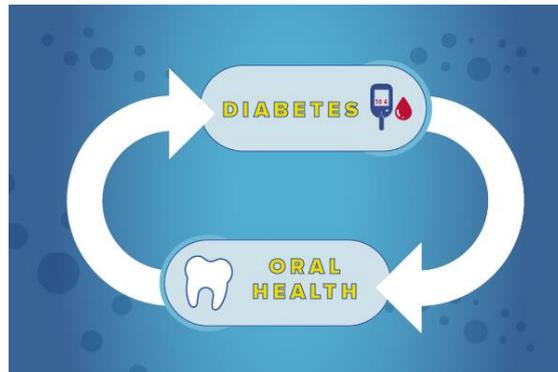


Shine Bright

Oral Health for Minority Ethnic (ME) Communities



NEWSLETTER
15TH OCTOBER 2020

Hello Members,

Hope everyone is well and safe. As stricter measures have been put in place, the infection rate continues to rise. The government has now put in a 6 pm curfew for restaurants and pubs. The stricter measures are hoping to reduce the risk of another national lockdown which is considered as fatal to the economy.

Schools are currently on their October break and it is very difficult to entertain children at home. There are limited public places open and household visits are restricted. Children can be entertained with various activities at home such as board games, family quiz and arts and crafts etc.

Together we hope we can fight this pandemic by following government guidelines and looking after our health and being aware of symptoms, avoiding unnecessary travel and staying at home as much as we can.

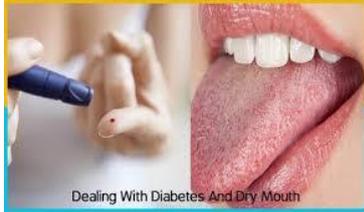
This week the topic of discussion will be the link between Diabetes and Oral health.

Diabetes is a disease that can affect the whole body — including the mouth.
People with diabetes face a higher than normal risk of oral health problems.

The link between diabetes and oral health problems is high blood sugar. If blood sugar is poorly controlled, oral health problems are more likely to develop. This is because uncontrolled diabetes weakens white blood cells, which are the body's main defence against bacterial infections that can occur in the mouth.

Just as studies have shown that controlling blood sugar levels lowers the risk of major organ complications of diabetes — such as eye, heart, and nerve damage — so to can diabetes protect against the development of oral health problems.

What oral health problems are associated with diabetes?



Dry mouth: Uncontrolled diabetes can decrease saliva (spit) flow, resulting in dry mouth. Dry mouth can further lead to soreness, ulcers, infections and tooth decay.



Gum inflammation (gingivitis) and periodontitis: Besides weakening white blood cells, another complication of diabetes is that it causes blood vessels to thicken. This slows the flow of nutrients to and waste products from body tissues, including the mouth. When this combination of events, the body loses its ability to fight infections. Since periodontal disease is a bacterial infection, people with uncontrolled diabetes might experience more frequent and more severe gum disease.



Poor healing of oral tissues: People with uncontrolled diabetes do not heal quickly after oral surgery or other dental procedures because blood flow to the treatment site can be damaged.



Thrush: People with diabetes who frequently take antibiotics to fight various infections are especially prone to developing a fungal infection of the mouth and tongue. The fungus thrives on the high glucose levels in the saliva of people with uncontrolled diabetes. Wearing dentures (especially when they are worn constantly) can also lead to fungal infections. This condition will also cause a burning of the mouth and/or tongue.

People with diabetes who smoke are at an even higher risk — up to 20 times more likely than non-smokers to develop thrush and periodontal disease. Smoking also seems to impair blood flow to the gums, which might affect wound healing in this tissue area.

If I have diabetes, how do I prevent oral health problems?

Since people with diabetes are more prone to conditions that might harm their oral health, it's vital to follow good oral hygiene practices, pay special attention to any changes in your oral health, and to call your dentist immediately if such changes occur. Suggestions to prevent or reduce oral health problems include:

- **Keep your blood sugar as close to normal as possible.** At each dental visit, tell your dentist the status of your diabetes. For instance, know your glycosylated haemoglobin (HbA1C) level. If you've had an episode of low blood sugar (also called an insulin reaction) in the past, you are at increased risk to have another one. Tell your dentist when your last episode was, how frequently such episodes occur, and when you took your last dose of insulin (if you take insulin).
- **See your doctor before scheduling treatment for periodontal disease.** Ask your doctor to talk to your dentist or periodontist about your overall health condition. If oral surgery is planned, your doctor or dentist will tell you if you need to take any pre-surgical antibiotics if you need to change your meal schedule or the timing and dosage of your insulin (if you take insulin).
- **Make sure to give your dentist your doctor's name and phone number.** This information will then be easily available to your dentist should any questions or concerns arise.
- **Bring your dentist a list of all the names and dosages of all medicines you are taking.** Your dentist will need to know this information to prescribe medicines least likely to interfere with the medicines you are already taking. If a major infection is being treated, your insulin dose (for those taking insulin) might need to be adjusted.
- **Postpone non-emergency dental procedures if your blood sugar is not in good control.** However, acute infections (infections that develop quickly), such as abscesses, should be treated right away.

Keep in mind that healing might take longer in people with diabetes. Follow your dentist's post-treatment instructions closely.

Other oral hygiene tips for people with diabetes:

- Have your teeth and gums cleaned and checked by your dentist at least twice a year. Talk to your dentist to determine how often you will need checkups.
- Prevent plaque build-up on teeth by using dental floss at least once a day.
- Brush your teeth after every meal. Use a soft-bristled toothbrush.
- If you wear dentures, remove them and clean them daily.
- If you smoke, talk to your doctor about ways to quit.

Hope these tips and information have raised awareness of members on Diabetes and Oral Health.

Till next time stay well, healthy and safe!!