PREVENTION AND ORAL HYGIENE

People with diabetes, like everyone else, need to thoroughly brush their teeth two to three times a day, floss daily and use a mouthwash with fluoride.

As well, everyone should visit a dental hygienist and dentist two to three times a year for a check-up, cleaning and scaling (removal of tartar).

OTHER REASONS TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR TEETH

Diabetes puts you at greater risk of periodontal disease, which, in turn, can make your diabetes more difficult to control.

Dental infections make hyperglycemia difficult to treat, can lead to cardiovascular disease and even acidosis.

All these conditions make controlling blood sugar (glycemia) very difficult.

CONCLUSION

Remember: Diabetes can cause complications for your oral health, just as poor oral health can cause complications for your diabetes.

It is also very important to tell your dental hygienist and dentist about any change in your medical condition. These professionals can then give you the best possible advice.

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Why are diabetics at greater risk?

**CHILDREN**

1. Children often have trouble controlling their blood sugar (glycemia). Hyperglycemia lowers saliva production, leading to dry mouth.

2. Recent studies have shown that diabetic teens have more gum inflammation and plaque on their teeth.

Two factors must be present for tooth decay to occur: dental plaque and carbohydrates.

**Here’ how:**

**BRUSH YOUR TEETH**

A thorough brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste helps eliminate dental plaque.

An electric toothbrush can often be a good way to motivate children to brush while improving their manual dexterity.

**DENTAL FLOSS**

Flossing at least once a day is essential for dislodging the dental plaque that builds up between the teeth.

Normally, children don’t have the necessary dexterity to floss properly until they are in fifth grade. Therefore, an adult should help them floss every day.

**EAT A PIECE OF CHEESE**

Eating a small piece of hard cheese immediately after eating foods with carbohydrates helps prevent tooth decay.

**CHEW GUM WITH XYLITOL**

Chewing xylitol gum 2 to 3 times a day for 5 to 20 minutes reduces the number of plaque-forming bacteria that cause tooth decay.

**OTHER EXCELLENT PREVENTION TIPS**

- Application of a pit and fissure SEALANT
- Use MOUTHWASH WITH FLUORIDE
- Use a STRAW to reduce the contact of acidic drinks with your teeth
- Rinse your mouth with water immediately after drinking acidic drinks (fruit juices, carbonated drinks or soft drinks) to protect your tooth enamel

People with diabetes run a greater risk of developing tooth decay (cavities) and periodontal disease. While these problems are less dramatic than other more debilitating diabetes complications, they can be harmful to your health, well-being and self-esteem. In fact, a link has been established between periodontal disease, chronic infections of the gums and medical problems like heart disease, stroke and respiratory diseases.