

Diabetes and oral health

Taking care of teeth and gums is important for managing your diabetes.

How can diabetes affect my teeth and gums?

Diabetes can cause problems such as:

- Dry mouth
- Tooth and gum disease
- Gum disease also makes it harder to manage diabetes.

Teeth and gum problems you might see:

- Red, swollen or bleeding gums
- Loose teeth
- Gums that are loose and pull away from teeth
- Bad breath
- Sensitive or sore teeth
- Loss of taste
- White patches on the tongue, cheeks or roof of mouth.

What can I do to prevent teeth and gum problems?

- Brush your teeth two times a day.
- Use a toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste.
- Clean between your teeth using floss or an interdental brush.
- Clean your dentures daily.
- Visit your dentist at least once per year or as advised by your health care provider.
- Manage your blood sugar levels.

What are my healthy choices?

- Choose water as your everyday drink.
- Eat regular meals and spread them evenly throughout the day.
- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Limit foods and drinks high in added sugar, saturated fats and salt.
- If you choose to drink alcohol, limit intake to no more than 2 standard drinks per day.
- Do not smoke - if you do, try and quit. Call Quitline 137 848 for support.

Everyone's needs are different so please see your doctor/diabetes educator/dietitian for advice and ask about any Medicare benefits for this. Try to do 30 minutes of physical activities daily.

What do I need to discuss with my health care provider?

- Tell them about any teeth and gums problems.
- Inform them of any treatments a dentist has suggested.

What do I need to discuss with my dentist?

- Inform them about your diabetes and any other health conditions.
- Tell them about any medications you are taking.

Dental services in NSW

Public dental services are free for adults with one of the following Australian Government concession cards:

- Pensioner Concession Card
- Health Care Card
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card

To make a dental appointment with a public dental service, call: 1800 679 336.

They will ask for your Medicare card details. If you are an adult, you will also need your concession card details.

To find a private dentist go to Australian Dental Association - Find a Dentist
<https://www.adansw.com.au/Community/FindaDentist>