



## COIA & ASSOCIATES

### Tooth care for adults with Diabetes

Most patients with well – controlled diabetes have no greater risk of dental problems than anyone else but a few problems can arise if the disease is not well controlled.

#### **Possible problems:**

##### Dental decay (caries)

Uncontrolled diabetes may lead to an increase intake of sugars which cause decay. Good brushing with fluoride toothpaste and mouthwash will help prevent this.

##### Gum disease

Uncontrolled diabetes means you have reduced immunity to infections and are more prone to gum disease and other infections in the mouth. Gingivitis, inflammation of the gums, caused by bacteria in plaque or more advanced periodontitis that damages the gum and bone below and can lead to loss of teeth are both more common in diabetics.

##### Oral Thrush (Candida)

This is common in people with uncontrolled diabetes and needs prompt treatment.

##### Dry mouth (Xerostomia)

This is common at diagnosis or if diabetes is not well controlled. This means you have less protective saliva to wash around and protect the mouth and teeth from problems. Your dentist can advise ways to prevent problems.

#### **How you can prevent problems:**

- Good dental hygiene – twice daily brushing with fluoride toothpaste and use of aids for cleaning in between such as floss or Tepe brushes
- Have regular dental check ups a least once a year
- Cut down on sugary snacks
- Chew sugar - free gum

##### Diet advice

Sugary foods should be only taken at mealtimes.

Fruit is a good snack in between meals for those with well controlled glucose levels. The only 'safe' drinks are milk, water, unsweetened tea or coffee. Pure unsweetened fruit juice is acidic and can erode the teeth if taken too often.

**If there is any conflict between managing the diabetes and the oral health (eg by taking extra sugar/ glucose), then diabetes management must take priority.**

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## COIA & ASSOCIATES

### **Tooth care for children with Diabetes**

It is very important for children with diabetes to get into good oral healthcare habits to prevent problems arising.

Snacking between meals is necessary for most children with Type 1 diabetes, but healthy eating guidelines apply. Children with hypoglycaemia need glucose or sugary food but it is important not to encourage them to see 'hypos' as a way to get sweets and chocolate.

Children who are old enough to chew sugar – free gum safely (over 6yrs old) can be encouraged to chew after meals for 20 minutes.

Regular dental visits are essential if glucose control is poor.

The dentist may suggest painting the new teeth with fissure sealant to prevent decay and fluoride supplements may be recommended.

#### **Prevent problems with:**

Good dental hygiene – twice daily brushing with fluoride toothpaste

Have regular dental check ups a least twice a year

Cut down on sugary snacks in favour of healthier options.

Chew sugar free gum for 20 minutes after meals.

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