

# DIABETES and your ORAL HEALTH

If you have been diagnosed with diabetes there is the potential to develop problems with your eyes, nervous system, kidneys, heart and other parts of your body. Diabetes lowers your resistance to infection and slows the healing process.

The most common oral health problems associated with diabetes are:

- \* Tooth decay
- \* Gum disease
- \* Salivary gland dysfunction
- \* Fungal infections
- \* Lichens Planus and inflammatory skin disorders
- \* Delayed healing
- \* Taste Impairment
- \* Aggressive bone loss

Because diabetes reduces the body's resistance to infection the gums and supporting bone are likely to be affected. Since these tissues hold the teeth in place it is very important to seek the advise of a dental healthcare professional immediately if:

- \* Your gums bleed easily
- \* You have bad breath or a persistent bad taste
- \* Your teeth feel as if they are moving
- \* There is pus between the teeth and gums when pressed
- \* Swelling, pain and tenderness develops
- \* Your teeth develop spaces or don't fit together when you bite

Infection in a diabetic person can make blood sugar levels VERY difficult to control. So if you are experiencing any of these symptoms or any others that are unusual it is best to seek professional help.

Preventive oral health care includes yearly regular check-ups, periodontal screenings with x rays to evaluate and treat appropriately. Your dentist may recommend more frequent evaluations and preventive care to maintain good oral health.

Practice good oral hygiene at home, follow your dentist and physicians instructions.

These healthy living tips for good oral health should be discussed with YOUR dentist.

Healthy Living Ambassador: Dr. Mendee Ligon, DDS