

Everyone knows that having a healthy mouth is important for eating, speaking, and feeling good about your smile. But you may not know that if you have diabetes, having a healthy mouth can help control your blood sugar. People who have diabetes are more likely to develop periodontal disease. Periodontal diseases are infections of the gum and bone that hold your teeth in place. Periodontal disease can make it more difficult to control blood sugar levels, and badly controlled blood sugar levels can make periodontal problems even worse. The good news is that by keeping your mouth clean and healthy and visiting your dentist regularly, you may be able to avoid these problems. AND you will have an easier time controlling your blood sugar.

- ✓ Take care of your teeth and gums by flossing daily, brushing twice a day and using a fluoride mouth rinse. Adding new steps to your routine may seem difficult; see the reverse side for tips about how to fit these things into your schedule.
- ✓ Even if you have dentures, it is still important to visit a dentist and dental hygienist regularly.
- ✓ If you smoke or chew tobacco, quit. Diabetes and smoking are the two biggest risk factors for periodontal disease. Call 1-800-QUIT NOW (784-8669) or visit [VTQuitNetwork.org](http://VTQuitNetwork.org).
- ✓ Dental providers are important members of your diabetes care team. If you don't currently see a dentist and dental hygienist for regular dental cleanings and check-ups, please schedule an appointment as soon as possible. If it has been a long time since your last visit, you may feel afraid. Tell the dentist and dental hygienist how you feel, they can help you be more relaxed. If you don't have a dentist, ask friends and family for help about which dentist to call. If you don't have dental insurance, here is a list of offices that may be able to help you pay based on how much you earn:

*Community Dental Clinic (Morrisville): 1-802-888-7585*

*Community Health Center of the Rutland Region: 1-802-774-5050*

*Island Pond Dental Center: 1-802-723-4300*

*Northern Counties Dental Center (Hardwick): 1-802-472-2260*

*Red Logan Dental Clinic (White River): 1-802-295-7573*

*The Community Health Center of Burlington: 1-802-652-1050*

*The Health Center (Plainfield): 1-802-454-1047*

*The Ludlow Dental Center: 1-802-228-4446*

*The Richford Dental Center (Richford and Swanton): 1-802-255-5520*

## Fitting It All In

Adding new steps in the morning or at bedtime can seem hard, especially if you are very busy. Taking away plaque (germs) from your teeth by brushing 2 times a day and flossing one time a day are the most important parts of keeping your mouth healthy. Here are some tips for keeping your mouth healthy and staying on schedule:



- If you are very tired at night, brush and floss right after you finish dinner. This has the added benefit of making you less likely to reach for snack after dinner!
- Combine different tasks! Keep a tooth brush and floss in the shower.
- Keep floss in your purse, by the TV, in your car, or by your desk. This reminds you to floss, and you may find yourself with a few minutes to do this during the day.
- Consider your diet: Chewing sugarless gum after meals and snacks may help prevent tooth decay, especially if it has an artificial sweetener called Xylitol in it. Drinking water that has fluoride in it can strengthen teeth and protect your teeth against decay. Both of these things can also help you control your weight.



For more information about the link between oral health and diabetes, visit the National Institute for Dental and Craniofacial Research at:

<http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/OralHealth/Topics/Diabetes/>