Diabetes and Oral Health

Research shows a link between diabetes and oral health.

If your diabetes is not well controlled you are at a higher risk of developing oral health problems such as gum disease, dry mouth and oral infections.

A good oral hygiene routine, regular visits to your dentist and controlling your blood glucose level will help you reduce your risk.
Visit your dental team every 6-12 months for advice and a check up. Always advise your dentist that you have diabetes.

**Tooth Tips**
- Brush teeth twice a day at bedtime and one other time with a fluoride toothpaste (at least 1,000ppm).
- Brush for 2-3 mins. Spit after brushing, don't rinse.
- Floss daily.
- Make healthy food choices. Follow the advise of your Doctor/ Dietitian/ Diabetes Team.
- Rinse your mouth with water after taking fast acting carbohydrates e.g for hypoglycemia treatment.

**Gum Disease**
- People with diabetes have a greater risk of gum disease. Gum disease can make it more difficult to control your diabetes.
- Signs of gum disease are gums that bleed when brushed, receding gums and bad breath.
- Good oral hygiene and controlling your blood glucose can help reduce your risk.

**Dry Mouth**
- Dry mouth can be caused by high blood glucose or some medication.
- Dry mouth increases the risk of tooth decay.
- Saliva substitutes and sipping water can help relieve dry mouth. Sugar free gum can increase saliva production.
- Avoid sucking sweets or drinking sweet drinks as these can cause tooth decay.

**Infection**
- Those with diabetes have a higher risk of oral infections such as thrush.
- Signs of thrush are white or red patches in the mouth. Talk to your G.P or Dentist.
- Risk factors for thrush are high blood glucose levels, frequent antibiotic usage and ill fitting dentures.

**Smoking**
- Smoking increases your risk of gum disease, mouth cancer, bad breath, stained teeth and cardiovascular disease.