

What should I do when visiting the dentist?

- Inform your dentist that you have diabetes
- Eat before you go to see your dentist
- Take your usual medicines unless your dentist tells you to change your dose for dental (surgery) treatment
- Check Blood Monitoring before visit



Remember toothache, stress anxiety can affect blood sugar levels.

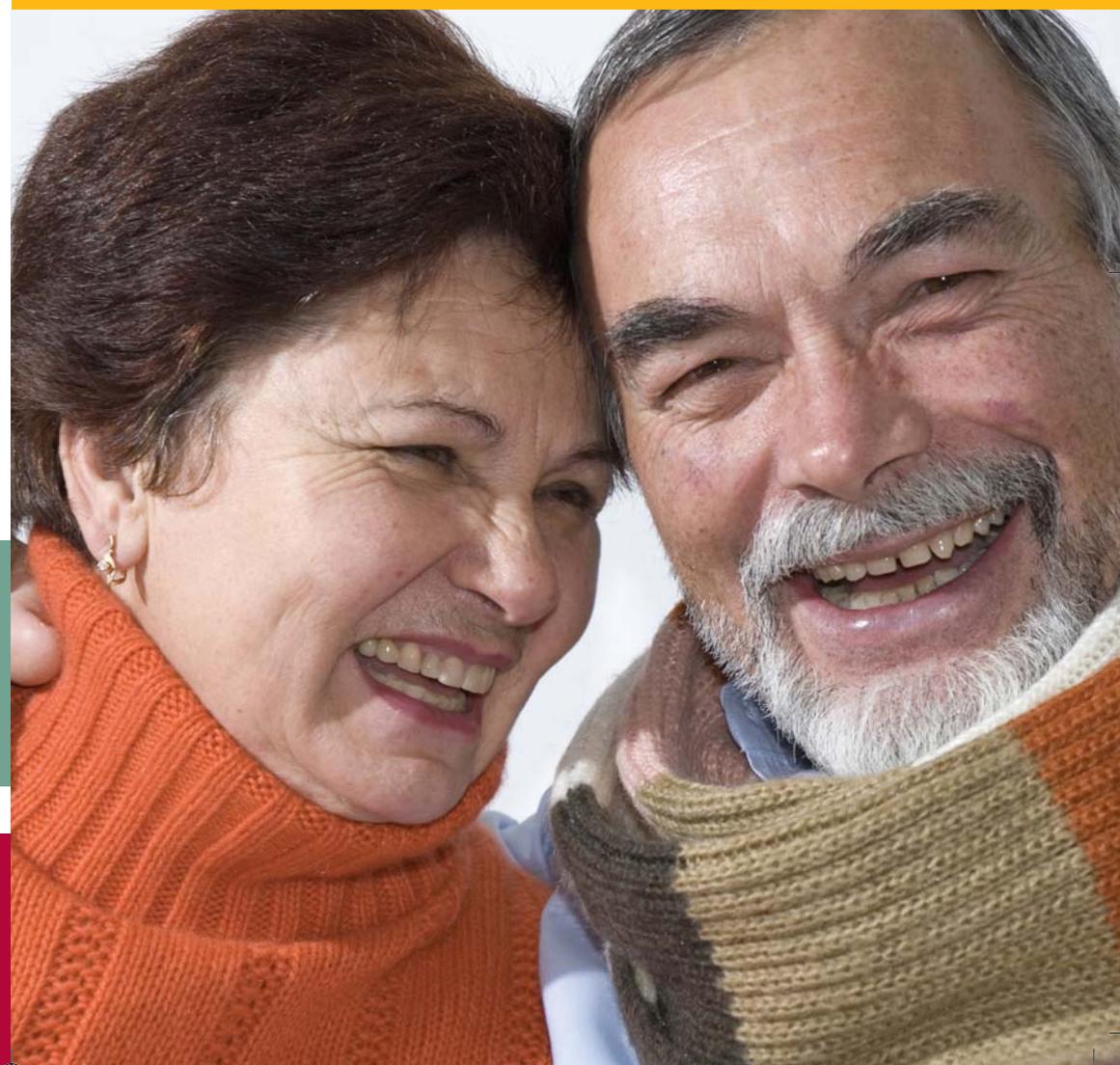


Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



Oral Health
Matters

Oral Health and Diabetes Sláinte Bhéil & Diaibéiteas



Always follow your doctor's and dietician's advice for meal planning, physical activity, blood glucose monitoring, and medication.

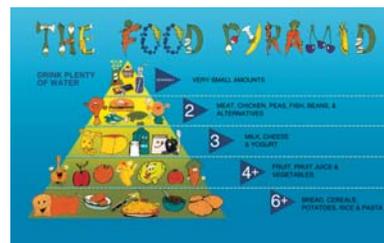
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Diabetes affects the whole body including the mouth.

You can keep your mouth healthy by:

- Controlling your blood sugar and taking your medication as directed
- Brushing your teeth twice a day especially at night using a fluoride toothpaste
- Flossing your teeth every day
- Using the food pyramid to make healthy food choices everyday
- Visiting your dentist regularly
- Not smoking



If your diabetes is not well controlled, you are more likely to develop problems in your mouth.

The most common oral health problems affecting people with diabetes are:

- **Gum disease**
- **Dry mouth**
- **Poor healing**
- **Oral infections**

Gum disease: Poor oral hygiene and smoking are the main risk factors for gum disease. People with diabetes are at greater risk especially if their blood sugar is high. At the same time, gum disease can make diabetes difficult to control. The first signs of gum disease are red, swollen gums that bleed when you brush your teeth. Untreated gum disease can lead to pain, infection and eventually loss of teeth. Strict oral hygiene practices are essential in order to maintain healthy gums and control your diabetes.

Poor healing: If diabetes is poorly controlled, healing may be slower and the risk of infection is increased after having a tooth out.

If you have diabetes and are a smoker the healing process will be slowed down further.



Dry mouth

- You may notice your mouth dry if your blood sugars are high. This may also be caused by the medication you take.
- Dry mouth increases your risk of tooth decay.
- If you have a dry mouth, sip tap water frequently or try sugar-free gum. Saliva substitutes are also available – please ask your doctor/dentist or pharmacist/chemist.



Oral infections

It is important to try and prevent oral infections as they can make your blood sugar levels difficult to control. This means you are more at risk of oral infections such as thrush.

Thrush (candida) is a common infection and appears as white or sometimes red patches in areas of the mouth.

It is a fungal infection which can be triggered by:

1. High blood sugar levels
2. Taking antibiotics often
3. Poorly fitting dentures
4. Wearing dentures all day and night may also cause infection.



Please ask your dentist for advice.