

Teach Back: Teeth

Ask: “Does diabetes affect the mouth and the teeth?” Wait for the answers, and then ask: “Do you know how that happens?” Explain briefly.

Diabetes increases the risk of infections in the mouth. The gums are the most affected. Infections in the gums can make a person with diabetes lose their teeth or may cause other infections that increase the blood glucose level, worsening diabetes.

Some diseases that appear in the mouth are associated with diabetes. They are:

- **Gingivitis:** an inflammation of the gums that produces bleeding and bad breath
- **Periodontitis:** the most severe form of gum disease. In this stage, the gums separate from the teeth, leaving areas of pus and bacteria. This continues with the destruction of the bone and tooth loss.

Caries: also known as tooth decay or dental cavities. The risk of caries is greater when high glucose levels reduce the production of saliva and increase dryness in the mouth. This facilitates reproduction of bacteria and acids, resulting in salivary gland infections.



Patients with diabetes need to pay special attention to tooth care, brushing and flossing regularly. It is also recommended to visit the dentist every six months to avoid complications from infections in the mouth.

To care for their mouths and teeth, people with diabetes should:

- Not smoke
- Learn correct tooth brushing
- Learn to use dental floss correctly
- Keep blood glucose levels under control
- Brush and floss teeth immediately after eating any food
- Avoid having a dry mouth
- Make a dental appointment for a checkup and deep cleaning every 6 months. Inform the dentist of their diabetes
- Visit the dentist immediately if they feel pain in the teeth or jaws or if their teeth begin to move. This visit can prevent unnecessary tooth loss.

Group Activity: Tooth Care

Duration: 5 minutes

Purpose:

Teach the participants the correct use of dental floss to improve dental hygiene in people with diabetes

Steps to follow:

- 1) Using the tooth model, show the different parts of the jaw. Emphasize circulation and the gums.
- 2) Make a demonstration of correct brushing.
- 3) Show the correct use of dental floss.
- 4) Ask: “What other things do we have to do to avoid infections in the mouth?” Reinforce with more recommendations.
- 5) Ask: “How often must a person with diabetes visit the dentist?” Recommend preventive visits and treatment visits for any gum disease.

