

Hygiene for your Diabetic HEALTH



All of us need to wash up to stay clean and germ-free, but it is very important for diabetics. Diabetes makes it harder for you to fight off germs and harmful infection. Regular hygiene can stop many infections and other health problems. See inside for tips on how to stay healthy.

HYGIENE FOR YOUR DIABETIC HEALTH

Living with diabetes requires extra care for your body, like proper foot care and oral hygiene. Diabetics are at an increased risk for gum disease and complications from minor foot injuries. Keeping good hygiene means making healthy habits that you can follow every day. This is as important as taking your medication and monitoring your glucose levels.

YOUR DENTAL DUTY

As a diabetic, it's harder for your mouth to fight off germs that cause gum disease. Normally, saliva (the spit in your mouth) protects against bacteria. But you may have "dry mouth" (or not have enough saliva) that causes food to collect around your teeth. This puts you at higher risk for cavities and gum diseases that infect your gums and bones. Read below for clean teeth tips!



- Stay away from sweets! Sugary foods spike your glucose levels and can give you cavities.
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day - after every meal or snack.
- Floss once a day.
- Schedule dental check-ups twice a year. See your dentist right away if your gums bleed or look red or swollen.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Plaque (Pl-ak): A bacterial film on teeth that develops if not brushed clean.

Gingivitis (Gin-gee-vi-tis): an early stage of gum disease from excessive plaque build-up.

Periodontitis (pair-e-o-don-TI-tis): serious gum disease that can lead to tooth loss.

CHECK YOUR FEET

If your diabetes causes numbness in your limbs, take extra time to take care of your feet. In the Islands, where we walk around in slippers or barefoot, it is easy to get small cuts or sores. Diabetes can make it hard for them to heal. And, you may not notice the wounds until they are infected. These minor injuries can become big problems, and if not dealt with, can even lead to amputation.

Foot Care

- Wash your feet in warm (not hot) water using mild soap. Don't soak your feet.
- Towel dry and put lotion on your feet (but not in between toes).
- Check for blisters, cuts, redness, sores or swelling. Tell your doctor right away if you find something.
- Wear fresh clean socks and well-fitting shoes every day.
- Never walk barefoot - indoors or outdoors.
- Watch your step! Walk in well-lit areas and clear pathways.
- Have your feet checked by your doctor at least once a year.

Trim toenails on a weekly basis by cutting along the natural curve of the toe.





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