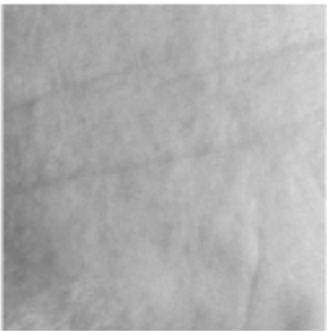



# Want Some Life Saving Advice?

## Ask Your Dental Hygienist About Oral Signs and Symptoms of Diabetes

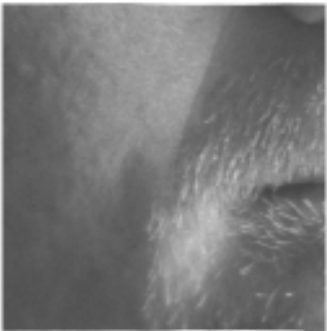
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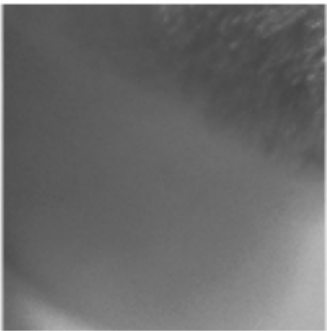
Citing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Diabetes Association (ADA) and the the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) report that diabetes contributed to more than 231,404 deaths in the United States in 2007.<sup>1</sup> Currently, 25.87 million children and adults in the U.S. have diabetes and 79 million have prediabetes.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, approximately 25% of individuals do not know they have diabetes.




However, help in detecting diabetes may come from an unlikely source—a registered dental hygienist. Research studies have found a link between periodontal (gum)



disease and diabetes. Symptoms of the disease often appear in the mouth, while almost one-third of people with diabetes have severe periodontal disease.<sup>1</sup> This is believed to be a result of the diabetic patient's greater susceptibility to developing infections. Conversely, severe periodontal disease may increase the risk of developing diabetes, and may make it more difficult to manage blood sugar levels. However, studies have found that patients who receive treatment for periodontal disease may be able to control the condition with less insulin.



According to the American Dental Hygienist' Association (ADHA), dental hygienists often detect symptoms of diabetes during routine oral health examinations. Dry mouth, bleeding gums, tooth decay, fruity breath and thick or ropey saliva are tell-tale signs of the condition. And, individuals with diabetes often lose more teeth compared to patients without this disease.



According to the ADA, diabetes that goes unchecked or untreated can result in serious and life-threatening complications, such as blindness; kidney disease; heart disease and stroke; and nerve disease that can lead to limb amputation.

In addition to helping patients understand the connection between oral health care and overall health, dental hygienists educate patients about proper oral hygiene and treat periodontal disease to prevent the condition from advancing and complicating other diseases.

For more information on diabetes, illnesses related to the disease, and American Diabetes

Month in November, contact the American Diabetes Association Web site at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org).

And for more information about proper oral health care, as well as brushing- and flossing instructions, please ask your registered dental hygienist, or visit the ADHA Web site, at [www.adha.org](http://www.adha.org).

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National diabetes fact sheet: general information and national estimates on diabetes in the United States, 2003. Rev ed. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004.

## Warning Signs of Diabetes:

- Frequent urination
- Frequent infections
- Extreme hunger
- Blurred vision
- Unusual thirst
- Unusual weight loss
- Extreme fatigue

Make an oral health appointment if you notice you experience any of these warning signs of periodontal disease:

- Bleeding gums when you brush or eat
- Red, swollen, or tender gums
- Gums that have pulled away from your teeth
- Pus between your teeth and gums when the gums are touched
- Change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite
- Persistent bad breath or unusual taste in your mouth.

With research indicating that periodontal disease and diabetes complicate each other, the ADA and ADHA recommend the following:

- Monitor your blood glucose level
- Have your dental hygiene appointments and thorough exams every 3 months
- Brush at least twice each day to remove plaque, using a soft nylon brush with rounded ends on the bristles
- Tilt the bristles at about a 45-degree angle against the gum line and brush gently in a circular motion
- Brush front and back and also brush the chewing surfaces
- Brush the upper surface of your tongue
- Use dental floss at least once a day to remove plaque and bacteria from between your teeth. Special floss holders and various types of floss are available to make flossing easier.



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