

We've all heard of diabetes and lots of people have it and don't even realise, but what affect could it have on your mouth and how can we help you?

Diabetes is a condition where the body cannot process sugar correctly. It all revolves around a little hormone called insulin which we need to carry sugar (energy) to the places in the body that need it e.g. the muscles

There are two types;

Type 1 (insulin dependant)

This is when the body stops producing insulin and symptoms for this can usually be spotted in childhood or in young adults.

Type 2 (non-insulin dependant)

Insulin is present but the body doesn't process it right away.

Diabetes is better known for the negative effects it has on the eyes, kidneys, nerves and heart, but it can seriously affect the health of your mouth as well.

Diabetes can cause dry mouth as it reduces saliva production. Saliva is a protective factor for the teeth and as such you can also be at high risk of cavities.

Diabetes delays healing and can make you more susceptible to infection. This puts you at higher risk of gum disease. Research has proved that maintaining good oral hygiene can actually alleviate the symptoms of diabetes aiding with better blood sugar control.

Some other, slightly more unusual effects of diabetes are that it can cause early eruption of teeth in children and that it can also affect your sense of taste.

How to maintain good oral health when suffering with diabetes;

- Regular visits to the dentist
- Regular visits to the hygienist
- Avoid smoking
- Brush twice daily and use interdental cleaning aids such as floss and tapes
- If you wear dentures then remove them overnight and clean them
- Healthy diet and exercise
- Take all prescribed medication according to your GP's instruction.

