

# 8 ways to protect your smile!

Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to bacteria buildup, which can lead to gum inflammation, fungal infections, dry mouth, mouth sores and cavities. What's more, gum disease can be harder to heal when you have diabetes and in turn can make it harder to control your blood sugar levels. The good news? These gum-friendly strategies can help protect your smile.

## 1. Use the right toothbrush.

Choose a soft-bristle brush, which won't tear gum tissue. Replace every three months to avoid infection and minimize bacteria buildup.

## 2. Brush after each meal.

Aim for two minutes and floss at least once a day. Don't forget to brush your tongue to get rid of bacteria!

## 3. Rinse with mouthwash.

Use an antiseptic version at least once a day.



## 4. Avoid acidic drinks.

These include soda, energy drinks and lemon or lime-infused water. They can further wear away the enamel of your teeth. Plus soda and energy drinks can spike blood sugar levels.

## 5. Keep mouth moistened.

Chew sugar-free gum or sugar-free candy to increase saliva production, which can prevent dry mouth.

## 6. Don't smoke.


Smoking can worsen diabetes and gum disease. If you have trouble kicking the habit, ask your healthcare provider for aids that can help, such as nicotine-replacement therapies and talk therapy.



## 7. Clean dentures.

If you have removable teeth, be sure to clean them every day to prevent bacteria buildup.

## 8. Get a checkup twice a year.

Let your dentist know you have diabetes and any medicines you may be taking. 

### Do you know the signs of gum disease?

Alert your healthcare provider if you have any of the below...

- Bleeding gums
- Loose teeth
- Sensitive gums or teeth
- Red, swollen gums
- Bad breath