

BETTER ORAL HYGIENE IMPROVES DIABETIC OUTCOMES

If you have type-2 diabetes, you have all the more reason to take good care of your teeth and gums by flossing and brushing regularly and getting regular dental checkups. It is also important to undergo “scaling” and “root planing” (non-surgical forms of “deep-cleaning” teeth above and below the gums) as needed. According to recent research, by treating and eliminating oral bacteria that contribute to tooth decay and gum disease, people with type-2 diabetes can better manage their blood glucose levels. Previous research has shown that oral bacteria may play an important role in diabetes. Those with type-2 diabetes are at greater risk of developing gum disease, and gum disease may increase the risk of developing type-2 diabetes.

P.S. [Type-2 diabetes](#) is the most common form of the disease, accounting for 90-95 percent of all cases among 30.3 million diabetics in the United States.

WANNA SIP?

Many foods and drinks, particularly fruit juices and sodas, contain acids that erode the enamel on teeth. As a result of this tooth erosion, loss of the protective enamel on the outer surface of your teeth can lead to tooth sensitivity, discoloration, and even tooth loss. However, some individuals who consume acidic drinks do not experience tooth erosion. To find out why, researchers conducted a study that analyzed the participants’ drinking habits (including the frequency, timing, and duration of dietary acid consumption). They found that sipping acidic drinks and swishing them in the mouth were associated with increased risk of dental erosion. The best way to minimize tooth enamel’s exposure to acidic drinks is to use a straw.

P.S. Research shows that sugar-free soda is just as erosive for teeth as sugar-sweetened soda, and hot drinks have greater erosive potential than cold drinks.

FIXING A CRACKED TOOTH

A cracked tooth is a fracture in the tooth enamel that can be caused by wear and tear; aging; grinding of the teeth (bruxism); chewing ice, gum, nuts, or hard candies; or biting down hard on a bone, pit, or other hard object. Cracked teeth are often difficult to diagnose because the crack may not be visible even on an x-ray. The first symptom of a cracked tooth is usually pain when biting or discomfort when inhaling. A crack can get larger and deeper with further wear and may cause serious injury to the tooth or promote infection. Depending on the severity of the crack, it can be treated with dental bonding, a veneer, or a crown.

P.S. “Craze lines,” tiny, shallow, painless cracks that affect only the outer enamel, are common for adults. They can be treated if they are deemed to be unattractive.

ABSENT TEETH

The term “anodontia” is used to describe the genetic or congenital (hereditary) absence of teeth. The teeth most commonly missing are the “lateral incisors” (on either side of the two front teeth) and the “second bicuspids” (two teeth behind the canine, or eye, teeth). As you might imagine, missing these teeth poses some problems beyond cosmetic. When holes are left where teeth should be, other teeth may slowly shift out of place, changing the way teeth fit together and adversely affect bite. Depending on the teeth that are missing, the dentist can provide a variety of tooth-replacement options, including a partial denture, a Maryland bridge (resin bonded), a bridge, or a crown supported by a dental implant.

P.S. If left untreated, anodontia can lead to malocclusion, gum damage, impeded bone (jaw) growth, reduced chewing ability, inarticulate pronunciation, and other possible problems.