

## Diabetes

Diabetes is a disease in which blood glucose levels are above normal. This can lead to serious health problems including heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, and even leg or foot amputations. However, there are also some oral health implications associated with diabetes. The most common and potentially harmful oral health problems are gingivitis and periodontitis, which is a more severe form of gum disease where the gums and bone supporting the teeth become seriously damaged and overrun with **bacterial** pathogens and result in tooth and bone loss.

Patients with inadequate blood sugar control appear to develop periodontitis more often and more severely and lose more teeth than those who control their diabetes. And because diabetes reduces the body's resistance to infection, and foreign **bacteria**, the gums are among the tissues likely to be affected. If you have diabetes, it's important that you also maintain good oral hygiene and visit your dentist regularly to prevent periodontal disease and other health complications from developing.

**\*Information provided by the Massachusetts State Dental Society**