

# Regular Dental Checkups Can Help Detect Diabetes and Prevent Periodontal Disease

*This article originally posted 23 November, 2010 and appeared in [Diabetes in Control](#)*

**A group of dental companies are reminding people that regular visits to the dentist can help alert patients when they are at risk for the disease....**

John Yamamoto, DDS, vice president of Professional Services for Delta Dental of California, states that, "Research has shown a connection between periodontal (gum) disease and diabetes." "People with diabetes are more likely to develop periodontal disease. In addition, recent studies have shown that periodontal disease may be associated with the development of Type 2 diabetes. Periodontal disease may also make it more difficult for diabetics to control their blood sugar, placing them at greater risk for other diabetic complications."

According to the ADA, 23.6 million American adults and children currently have diabetes. Of those, 5.7 million do not know that they have the disease. Of even greater concern is that nearly three times that number -- an estimated 57 million people -- have a condition called pre-diabetes, and a significant proportion of these people will develop Type 2 diabetes within 10 years.

"Regular checkups by a dentist, good oral hygiene and treatment of any periodontal disease are especially important for Type 1 and Type 2 diabetics, as well as for those with pre-diabetes," added Yamamoto.

The connection between diabetes and oral health is just one example of the relationship between oral health and overall wellness. It also underscores the important role that dental care providers can take in early detection of serious systemic diseases.

Yamamoto noted that even if you take good care of your teeth, regular checkups should always be part of your calendar for several reasons:

- ◆ Dental professionals can use today's dental exams to screen for oral cancers and other health issues that can be difficult to spot on your own. More than 120 diseases can cause specific signs and symptoms in and around the mouth and jaw. Dental professionals performing checkups can spot signs that could indicate serious health problems elsewhere in the body that need attention.
- ◆ Checkups allow your dentist to keep up with changes to your health status. Upon learning of medical conditions you've developed or treatments you're receiving, your dentist can recommend strategies to help you proactively counter the negative effects the conditions and treatments would otherwise have on your oral health.
- ◆ Preventive checkups provide dentists with opportunities to identify and intervene early in dental diseases. This can help reduce pain as well as the costs associated with more severe forms of dental diseases. If caught early, periodontal disease is easier to manage and, in some cases, it is reversible.

**Publishers Comment:** Patients undergoing dental procedures usually sit in the dental chair for about an hour, with their mouths open and cannot talk. What if there was a video on diabetes to educate them on different topics as they go through their procedure?

*Delta Dental companies under common management, collectively provide dental benefits plans to nearly 25 million people in 15 states*