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# Diabetes

## Dental Health Guide



**Jeff Kinner, DDS**

## Dental Care for Diabetic Children

When your child has diabetes, elevated blood sugar levels in the blood may damage your child's teeth and gums. Diabetes increases your child's susceptibility to gum disease, cavities, dental infections and early tooth loss. Blood sugars may affect your child's teeth and gums similar to dietary sugars, by feeding cavity-causing bacteria.

Conversely, poor oral hygiene practices can make diabetes more difficult to control. Tooth or gum infections may cause an increase in your child's blood sugar, thus increasing the need for insulin.

High blood sugar provides a more favorable environment for cavity and gum-disease causing bacteria, which may in turn lead to higher blood sugar. Thus a vicious, unhealthy cycle is created.

A high sugar diet will increase your child's blood sugar and insulin needs. A high sugar diet also feeds dental disease-causing bacteria. Follow all medical dietary advice because diabetic dietary guidelines are also tooth and gum friendly.

### Prevent Damage to Your Child's Teeth and Gums

Brush your child's teeth twice a day. It is recommended to begin flossing at about 2 years of age. Flossing is most critical for primary (baby) teeth that are close together, as the tooth brush cannot reach into tight spaces.

Look for early signs of gum disease and tooth decay. Gum disease first manifests itself as red, puffy gums that bleed with brushing or flossing. Early signs of decay include fine white lines on the surface of the tooth that is next to the gum line. Lift your child's lip and look for these early signs of decay on the upper front teeth.

Children with diabetes should see the dentist at least twice a year. It is recommended that children see a dentist by their first birthday. New, non-radiation, laser fluorescence scans allow contemporary dentists to detect decay in its earliest stages. Early decay may now be reversed using a variety of modern non-invasive treatments.

## How Diabetes May Affect the Rest of Your Child's Mouth

Your child's teeth and gums aren't the only areas of your child's mouth at risk. The following problems may not be as preventable, but they are manageable:

### Dry mouth:

Sometimes diabetic children do not produce enough saliva. This condition is called *xerostomia*. Because saliva helps wash away the bacteria that cause gum disease and cavities, dry mouth may increase your child's risk of dental problems.

There are several products that the dentist can recommend to combat dry mouth. Your child's dentist may also prescribe medications to help your child combat dry mouth. Simply sipping water is an excellent way to relieve dry mouth.

### Fungal infections and burning mouth:

Also called thrush, *Candida albicans* fungal infections are more prevalent in children with diabetes. If you find white "cottage cheese" patches in your child's mouth that rub off to reveal a red, inflamed tissue underneath, your child may have an oral fungal infection.

If you suspect that your child has an oral fungal infection please call the dentist or pediatrician in a timely manner. Oral anti-fungal medications may be prescribed.

### Dental Visits: Some Considerations

It is important for your child's dentist to know about your child's diabetes and how well controlled it is. For preventive dental visits maintain your child's routine. Bring your child's glucose monitor, in the event it is necessary to check your child's blood sugar levels. Postpone non-emergency dental visits if your child's blood sugar is not under good control. If your child is Type I Diabetic, the best time for a dental visit is in the morning, after breakfast (sedation is an exception).

Major dental work or dental emergencies will be handled according to your child's control status. If your child is not well controlled, treatment in a hospital setting may be required.



# **Dr. Jeff Kinner** **The Children's Dentist**

**Call: (702) 838-9013**

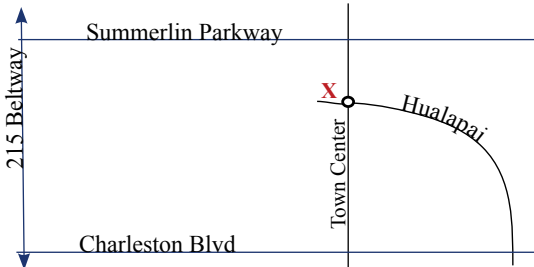
## **Hours:**

Monday.....	By Appointment
Tuesday.....	7:30am - 5:00pm
Wednesday.....	7:30am - 5:00pm
Thursday.....	7:30am - 5:00pm
Friday.....	8:00am - 12:00
Saturday and Sunday.....	Closed

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