ORAL FITNESS FACT SHEET

Diabetes and Oral Health

People with diabetes get gum disease more than people without diabetes. Gum disease can damage your gums and the bones that hold your teeth in place and may lead to painful chewing problems and infections. Your teeth can loosen or fall out, if you have a severe infection.

When you have diabetes, it can take a long time for a gum infection to heal. Gum infections also make it hard to control blood sugar. As a diabetic, severe gum disease can increase your blood sugar, putting you at increased risk for diabetic complications.

Diabetes can cause:

- Dry mouth, a condition which happens when you do not have enough saliva to keep your mouth moist.
- The glucose level in your saliva to increase.
- Thrush, a fungal infection called which causes painful white patches in your mouth.

Take the time to check your mouth regularly for any problems such as:

- Gums that bleed when you brush and floss.
- Dryness, soreness.
- White patches.
- A bad taste in the mouth.

Take good care of your teeth and gums to prevent gum infections.

- Have dental check ups every six months.
- Brush two or three times a day with soft bristle toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss your teeth daily.
- Quit smoking. Smoking makes gum disease worse. Your physician or dentist can help you quit.