

## Oral Wellness Newsletter



### Diabetes and gum disease are connected

You could end up with gum disease if you don't control your [blood sugar](#). And having gum disease can make it harder to take care of your [diabetes](#). That's why it's important to keep your mouth, teeth and gums healthy.

#### Get the extra dental care you need

Your dental plan may come with extra benefits for gum disease treatment. With Smile for Health®-Wellness, you may be able to get your gum disease treated at no cost by an in-network dentist.<sup>[1]</sup>

#### Find out if you're eligible

Log into your [MyDentalBenefits](#) account to check if you have Smile for Health®-Wellness.

#### Tips to care for gum disease

- Follow a good oral care routine each day.
- Control your blood sugar levels.
- Visit the dentist for regular exams and cleanings.
- Avoid sweets, sugary drinks and sugar-free drinks that are high in acid.

### Dig into diabetes and your mouth

### Eye exams can catch diabetes

Just like regular dental checkups, eye exams can help detect other health problems.

Diabetes can damage the blood vessels in your retina. An eye doctor can see these blood vessels by looking inside your eyes.

Diabetes can cause serious eye conditions such as glaucoma and cataracts. Since eye doctors are sometimes the first to detect changes in your health, it's important to get an eye exam every 12 months.

[Hear what else eye doctors can detect](#)



## Take part in the [Great American Smokeout](#)

Smoking and chewing tobacco can lead to health problems, including oral health issues. Think about it – tobacco hits your mouth before any other part of your body.

Tobacco can cause yellow teeth and bad breath. But it has more serious oral health risks, including loss of taste and smell, mouth sores, cavities and slow healing after dental work.

### Why kick the habit?

Quitting isn't easy, but it's worth it. From fresher breath to reducing your risk of gum disease and oral cancer, there are many oral health reasons to stop smoking. As part of the [Great American Smokeout](#) this month, make the commitment to kick those butts.

### Say no to vaping, too

Don't take up vaping instead – [it isn't any safer](#). Most e-cigarettes have nicotine and other harmful chemicals including lead and formaldehyde.

[Learn more dangers of using tobacco](#)



## Dan's dental care tips for people with Alzheimer's

It can be hard to get people with dementia to take proper care of their mouths. They may not remember to brush their teeth. And they might have forgotten how to actually do it.

Dan Tison, an oral wellness consultant at United Concordia Dental, shares advice that can help you care for a loved one with Alzheimer's.

**Give step-by-step instructions** – Break the process down simply. Say, “Take the cap off of the toothpaste. Next, squeeze some onto your toothbrush.” And so on.

**Demonstrate how yourself** – Let the person follow along as you show how to do each step. Or put your hand over your loved one's hand and guide them along.

**Clean their mouth twice a day** – Gently brush the teeth, gums and tongue. Rinse dentures after meals and soak them overnight. Use a soft toothbrush or moist gauze to clean gums.

### Can gum disease cause Alzheimer's?

Recent research shows a connection between gum disease and Alzheimer's. [Read what our dental director Dr. Roosevelt Allen found out about the study.](#)

<sup>1</sup> Your standard plan's frequency limitations (how often services are covered), annual maximum (the maximum amount your plan will pay toward services during the plan year), and other details still apply.

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