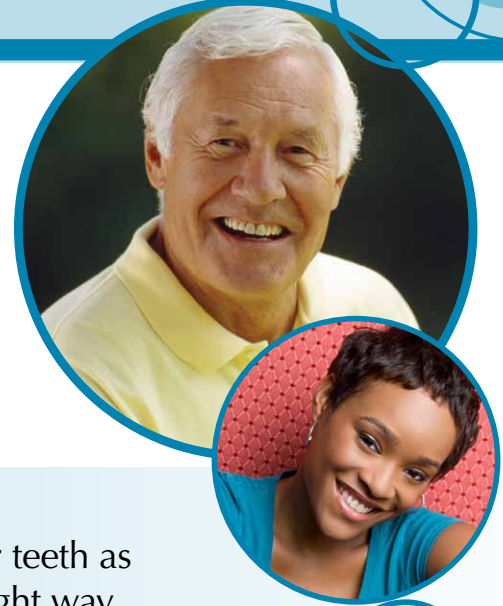


# Take Care of Your Teeth and Gums!

Taking care of your teeth and seeing a dentist at least once a year is key for people with diabetes. With diabetes, you have a higher chance of getting gum disease. Gum disease is when plaque builds up on the teeth. The gums become red, swollen, and many times you will see bleeding. Healthy gums should be pink and firm. They are tightly attached to your teeth and will not bleed when you brush.



## Facts about Gum Disease

- Gum disease or “gingivitis” is caused by not brushing your teeth as much as you should. It is also caused by not brushing the right way.
- Gum disease can get worse over time if it’s not treated. Periodontitis (per-ee-o-don-tay-tis) is a more serious type that pulls the gums away from the teeth making a “pocket.”
- Gum disease can be treated by brushing and flossing your teeth daily!

## How to Keep Your Gums Healthy:

- Take good care of your diabetes. If you have not already had an A1c test, ask your provider to give you one at your next visit. If your A1c score is less than 7, you have less chance of getting gum disease.
- Take good care of your teeth and gums.
- Visit a dentist at least once a year. Your dentist can find problems early and treat them before they get too bad.
- Be a non-smoker. Smoking makes gum disease even worse.
- Brush your teeth 2 times a day for 2 to 3 minutes each time.
- Brush every area of your teeth and where the gums meet the teeth.
- Brush your teeth with small, back and forth moves. Be gentle!
- Floss between your teeth.
- Use a mouthwash with fluoride after brushing your teeth.

