

Dental Checkups are Important for Managing Diabetes

Many people who have diabetes are unaware of it. However, a routine dental exam might uncover the presence of this disease.

There are ways for dentists to spot undiagnosed diabetes. Millions of diabetics also have to battle gum disease, and caring for gum disease is an important part of overall diabetes management.

“A routine oral exam could help identify health problems like diabetes. Once diagnosed, diabetics can seek much-needed treatment,” said Shannon Mills, DDS, FAGD, FICD, Vice President of Professional Relations at Northeast Delta Dental. “The mouth can offer clear-cut signals that the disease is present.”

Recent research indicates that diabetes is associated with an abnormally high degree of gum inflammation and localized bleeding, and diabetics have a higher than normal risk for periodontal disease. Controlling sugar levels can help control diabetes. Treating periodontal disease and reducing bacteria in the body are also important in the overall management of diabetes.

Statistics from the American Diabetes Association indicate that 17 million people



in the United States have diabetes, and the association estimates that more than five million of them are not aware that they have the disease. Early detection is important because, when left untreated, diabetes can lead to a number of serious health complications, including kidney disease, heart disease and stroke, nerve damage, blindness, and death.

“Our goal is to highlight the connection between the condition of the mouth and the body’s processes and point out the dentist’s role in detecting and treating the oral manifestations of diabetes,” said Dr. Mills.

“We want to let people know that routine trips to the dentist can lead to more than just a nice smile,” continued Dr. Mills. “It can lead to early detection and management of a serious disease, like diabetes.”