



# Diabetes and Dental Disease

## Controlling diabetes through the mouth

Diabetes can compromise oral health, putting people at an increased risk for oral infections and periodontal disease

- As the fifth deadliest disease in the United States, diabetes is one of our nation's heaviest health burdens. It is also a disease that is strongly linked to oral health.
- According to a 2002 study, the annual medical costs for diabetics were estimated at \$13,242 per person as compared to \$2,560 for non-diabetics.
- Today's research evidence suggests that for every one-point reduction in blood glucose levels (as measured through a blood test) there is a 40 percent reduction in the risk for diabetic complications of the eye, kidney and nervous system. A one-point reduction in blood glucose levels also appears to decrease the incidence of heart attacks by 14 percent and diabetes-related deaths by 21 percent.
- The relationship between diabetes and oral health, specifically periodontics, has been well established by researchers:
  - ✓ Studies have consistently shown that diabetics have more frequent and more severe periodontal disease. This is true for people with both insulin-dependent and noninsulin-dependent diabetes.
  - ✓ Chronic periodontal disease can make it more difficult to control diabetes.
  - ✓ Smokers increase their risk significantly, making it 20 times more likely that they will develop periodontitis, the most serious form of periodontal disease.
- Preliminary findings from a study funded by Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio and Indiana suggest that diabetics with periodontal disease who receive more frequent dental cleanings are healthier and may experience a reduction in their blood glucose levels.

