



Spotlight on Oral Health



Editors
Gwen Sawicki
Ellen Wagner

Volume 14, Issue 2

September 2019

Diabetes and Oral Health



What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic disease in which the body either cannot produce insulin or cannot properly use the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone that controls the amount of glucose (sugar) in the blood. Diabetes leads to high blood glucose levels, which can damage organs, blood vessels and nerves. The body requires insulin to use sugar as an energy source.

What is the pancreas and what does it do?

The pancreas is an organ that sits behind the stomach and releases hormones into the digestive system. In a healthy body, when blood glucose levels become too high, special cells in the pancreas (called beta cells) release insulin. Insulin is a hormone and it causes cells to take in sugar to use as energy or to store as fat. This causes blood glucose levels to go back down.

What are the complications of diabetes?

Having high blood glucose levels can cause diabetes-related complications, such as chronic kidney disease, foot problems, non-traumatic lower limb (leg, foot, toe, etc.) amputation, eye disease (which can lead to blindness) heart disease, stroke, oral disease, anxiety, nerve damage, and erectile dysfunction (in men).

Diabetes-related complications can be very serious and even life-threatening. Properly managing blood glucose levels reduces the risk of developing these complications.

Are you at risk?

You could be one of the many Canadians who have diabetes and don't know it. Learn the risk factors for type 1 and type 2 diabetes, and take action to stay healthy. People with diabetes can expect to live active, independent and vital lives if they make a commitment to careful diabetes management.

Diabetes and Oral Health

Oral health is important for everyone, but poorly managed blood glucose (sugar) levels can lead to dental decay and gum disease/periodontal disease (a condition that affects the gums and the bone surrounding the teeth). With very few exceptions, people with diabetes can be treated by dentists in the same manner as those without diabetes.

People with poorly managed blood glucose levels have a decrease in saliva and an increase in salivary sugar, which can lead to dry mouth, dental decay, fungal infections (thrush) and other complications. There are several over-the-counter products that either help stimulate saliva production or act as a saliva substitute. Ask your oral health professional about information on these products.

Uncontrolled blood glucose levels make gum/periodontal disease and other oral infections more difficult to heal. With poor blood glucose control, blood vessels thicken, slowing the removal of harmful wastes and decreasing the flow of nutrients, thus gum disease can occur more often and more severely.

Continued on page 2

Inside this issue:

Diabetes and Oral Health 1,2

Something to Smile About 2

Dental Health for Your Pet 3,4

Thumb Sucking 4

Recipes/Tooth Trivia 5

Autumn shows us
how beautiful it is to
let things go

author unknown



Be true to your
teeth or they will
be false to you!





Spotlight on Oral Health



How to protect your teeth and gums.

1. Brush twice a day (morning and night) . Select a soft bristle toothbrush and replace it every three months or if you have had a cold. Apply a pea size amount of fluoridated toothpaste and brush all surfaces of the teeth paying attention to the area where the gums and teeth meet, the tongue and behind your last teeth. Note: bleeding gums are the first sign of gum disease.
2. Floss between your teeth once a day. Wrap about 0.5 metres of floss around your middle fingers and gently slide the tight section of floss between the teeth, being careful not to snap or cut the gums. Rub the floss up and down in a C shape along the side of each tooth. Use a clean section of floss between each tooth. Remember to floss behind the last tooth. If this method of flossing is too difficult for you, you can also use a floss wand or disposable flossers.
3. Clean your dentures daily and remove them for at least 6 hours each day to give your gums a rest.
4. Don't use tobacco or e-cigarettes . The chemicals in these products affect the gums by causing poor circulation of the blood in the gums which can lead to gum disease, oral cancers, etc.
5. Eat well balanced meals, healthy snacks and limit your sugar intake.
6. See your dentist regularly. Your dentist's goal is to help you prevent problems before they occur. Regular dental care is especially important to prevent problems from occurring when you have diabetes. Be sure to let your dentist know that you have diabetes.



Reference: Diabetes Canada

Something to Smile About!

Q: Why did the computer go to the dental office?

A: Because it had bluetooth

Q: What does the dentist of the year get?

A: A little plaque

Q:What does a marching band member use to brush her teeth?

A: A tuba toothpaste



If you see someone without a smile, give them one of yours!



Oral Health for your Pet:

The importance of good oral health in dogs and cats cannot be emphasized enough. Proper dental care can actually help prevent many health problems as your pet ages.

When early plaque/tartar buildup is diagnosed, we can offer some preventive care tips such as:

- ◆ A diet and dental chews designed to prevent tartar buildup
- ◆ Toothbrush and toothpaste kits, along with tips on how to brush their teeth
- ◆ Water additives that can help prevent tartar formation

However, once tartar has noticeably accumulated on the surface of the teeth the next step is a professional dental cleaning. This procedure needs to be done under general anesthesia.

Periodontal disease is the most common oral health condition in dogs and cats .By the time your pet is 3 years old, he or she will very likely have some early evidence of periodontal disease which will worsen as your pet grows older if effective preventive measures aren't taken. Early detection and treatment are critical because advanced periodontal disease can cause severe problems and pain for your pet.



What are some consequences of not maintaining good oral health?

Delaying or abstaining from dental cleanings can have drastic implications on your pet's overall health:

- ◆ As tartar builds up, abscesses may form along the gum line or at the tooth root causing pain and infection
- ◆ Left unattended, bacteria can enter the blood stream which can lead to bacteria lodging in the heart valves, kidneys and liver
- ◆ Dental pain can also become so severe that your pet may eat less or stop eating completely, losing weight as a result.

Why is cleaning my pet's teeth more expensive than cleaning my teeth?

The cost of dental care for pets has increased as the quality of anesthesia, cleaning, and services have increased. One example is that x-rays are often offered which allows the veterinarian to see the roots and bone surrounding each tooth. We want to provide safe anesthesia and a service that actually helps to treat pain and prevent progression of disease. To do this, veterinarians need special equipment such as: ultrasonic scalers, high-speed drills, IV fluids and anesthetic monitoring equipment. Most of this equipment is not necessary when humans teeth are cleaned because humans do not need anesthesia.

Continued page 3



Spotlight on Oral Health



Also, remember that usually our hygienist is performing a routine preventive cleaning before any tartar has built up on our teeth. Pets rarely receive dental care this early and thus their cleaning is not truly preventive.

Why does dentistry require anesthesia?

When you go to the dentist, you know that what's being done is meant to help you and keep your mouth healthy. Your dentist uses techniques to minimize pain and discomfort and can ask you how you are feeling, so you accept the procedures and do your best to keep still. Your pet does not understand the benefit of dental procedures and he or she reacts by moving, trying to escape, or even biting. Anesthesia makes it possible to perform the dental procedures with less stress and pain for your pet. In addition, anesthesia allows for a better cleaning because your pet is not moving around and risking injury from the dental equipment. If x-rays are needed, your pet needs to be very still in order to get good images, and this is unlikely without sedation or anesthesia.

Although anesthesia will always have risks, it's safer now than ever and continues to improve so that the risks are very low. Most pets can go home the same day of the procedure, although they might seem a little groggy for the rest of the day.

I can't tell if my pet is in any pain, even though he has broken teeth and red inflamed gums. Wouldn't he stop eating if he was in any pain?

Some pets will stop eating all together when their teeth, bone, and gums hurt badly enough. The vast majority, however, will find some tactic to keep eating. They may chew on the other side of their mouths or swallow their kibble whole. Pets have an extremely strong instinct to survive no matter what discomfort they feel. Sometimes the symptoms of periodontal disease are so vague that we don't notice them. Pets may be reluctant to hold their toys in their mouths, be less playful, resent having their teeth brushed, have a hard time sleeping, or have no outward symptoms at all.

Submitted by Kim Hoshizaki DVM

I've tried everything! How do I get my child to stop sucking his/her thumb?

Something to try — T guard for thumb suckers

<https://tguard.com/product/aerthumb/>





Recipes

Pumpkin Dippers



You'll need: 2 large carrots, toothpicks, curly-leaf parsley, scallions, hummus

Directions: Cut carrots into coin shapes and spear in the center with a toothpick. Add a parsley leaf to the top of the carrot (through the toothpick), and then cut a small piece of scallion and thread it onto the toothpick to use as the pumpkin stem. Spread hummus on a platter, dish, or tray to create the field, and arrange pumpkins on top.

Witches' Broomsticks



You'll need: reduced-fat cheese sticks, pretzel sticks and chives

Directions: To make the broom, slice the mozzarella stick across in thirds. Use a knife or scissors to cut a fringe pattern on the lower half of the cheese. Insert a pretzel stick into the cheese, making the broomstick, and tie a chive around the top.

For more fun and nutritious recipes check out: <https://www.everydayhealth.com/healthy-halloween-treats-for-kids.aspx>

Questions?

Comments?

Suggestions?



We would be happy to hear from you!

gwen.sawicki@saskhealthauthority.ca

ellen.wagner@saskhealthauthority.ca

Tooth Trivia

- In the Middle Ages, people believed that dogs' teeth boiled in wine, made an excellent mouthwash to prevent tooth decay
- With it's 20 inch long teeth, a hippo can bite a small boat in half
- Snails are very small, but have thousands of tiny teeth all lined up in rows