

Dental Treatment Helps People with Diabetes to Better Manage Their Condition says Sydney Dentist

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Sydney-based dentist Dr. Alistair Graham is educating the public about how dental treatments can help people with diabetes better manage their condition.

"It?s long been established that people with poorly controlled diabetes are more likely to develop periodontitis ? a severe gum infection that permanently damages soft tissue, tooth and bone," says Dr Graham.

"But there?s less awareness that this relationship can go the other way too," he continues.

Periodontitis can raise blood sugar levels and worsen health complications associated with diabetes ? such as retina, kidney and heart disease.

Scientific evidence has shown that diabetes patients with gum disease can actually lower their blood sugar levels and improve connected health problems by getting dental treatment for periodontitis.

A Cochrane review published earlier this year shows that periodontal treatment improves gylcaemic control in patients with both diabetes and advanced gum disease by ?a clinically significant amount?.

Authors working with Cochrane examined 35 trials where participants either received gum disease treatment or did not.

The results show a 0.43% ?absolute reduction? in blood sugar levels (HbA1c) three to four months after periodontal treatment. Similarly, there was a 0.30% reduction after 6 months and a 0.50% reduction after 12 months.

These findings are significant when compared to the group that didn?t receive periodontal treatment.

?Any improvement in glycaemic control resulting from regular and appropriate periodontal treatment has the potential to make an impact on the development of diabetic complications and on quality of life for people with diabetes,? the review states.

Crucially, diabetic patients who lower their blood sugar levels by even a small amount are less likely to experience serious health problems related to their condition.

For example, the risk of microvascular complications falls by 35 per cent for every percentage point reduction in HbA1c levels ? according to one epidemiological study mentioned in the Cochrane article.

Dr Alistair Graham from Mona Vale Dental says that people should let their dentist know if they have diabetes, so that extra care is taken to protect their oral health.

?Gingivitis is a mild form of gum disease that can be easily treated and reversed, if caught in time. You should see your dentist at the first sign of any symptoms like bleeding gums, sensitive teeth, bad breath and tender lips,? Dr Alistair said.

?We want to treat the bacterial infection before it worsens to become periodontitis, which is harder to manage and causes permanent damage like tooth loss. Periodontal disease may even increase inflammation in other parts of the body.?

Dr Graham published an article titled The Two-way Relationship Between Diabetes and Periodontal Disease to advise people on how to prevent and treat gum disease at all stages of the condition.

The article explains what a few scientific studies tell us about the two-way bond between diabetes and

periodontal disease. This includes some evidence that periodontitis may raise blood sugar levels in people who don?t have diabetes ? so it?s important for everyone to be proactive about their oral health.

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Mona Vale Dental and Implant Centre

Mona Vale Dental's highly skilled team of dentists, hygienists and support staff provide the highest quality of dental care to thousands of people across Sydney's Northern Beaches.

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