

Diabetes and Oral Health: A Vital Connection

Diabetes and oral health are closely connected, each affecting the other. Poor oral health can contribute to inflammation, gum disease, dry mouth, and other health issues. These problems can affect overall health, making it essential for individuals with diabetes to prioritize their dental care. Having regular visits with both dental and medical providers is vital to those with diabetes.

The Mouth-Body Connection

Issues in the mouth can have impacts that affect systems throughout the body, making dental exams crucial for prevention and treatment.³ People with diabetes are more likely to experience oral health issues, which can make managing blood sugar levels more difficult.

- **Gum disease** is more common in people with diabetes and can make blood sugar harder to control.
- **Dry mouth** is a common side effect of diabetes and can increase the risk of tooth decay and oral infections.
- **Oral infections** contribute to poor blood sugar control, increasing the risk of heart and kidney disease.¹
- **Tooth loss or dental pain** can lead to poor nutrition and can make blood sugar harder to control.

Diabetes in North Dakota

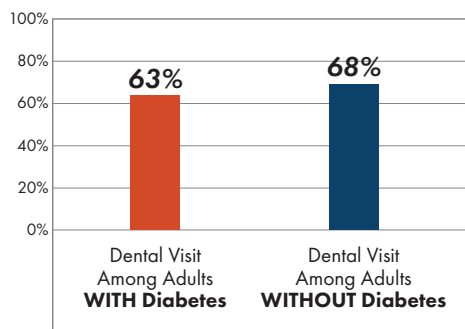
According to the 2022 North Dakota Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (ND BRFSS) data, the rate of adults ages 18 and older in ND diagnosed with diabetes has gradually increased from 8% in 2011 to 10% in 2022, affecting about 57,200 people.¹



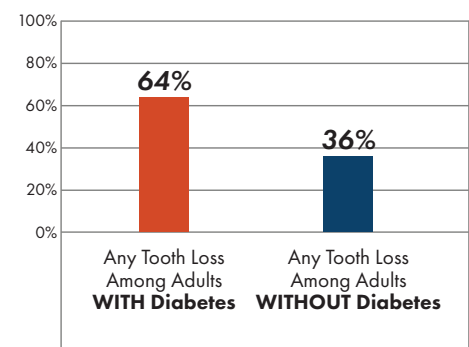
By the Numbers: Dental Visits and Tooth Loss in North Dakota

In 2022, adults with diabetes were less likely to have a dental visit (63%) than those without diabetes (68%) regardless of age.²

North Dakota 2022:
Dental visits among adults 18+ with and without diabetes



North Dakota 2022:
Any tooth loss among adults 18+ with and without diabetes



Why it Matters

Oral health issues related to diabetes are largely preventable with coordinated care. By educating patients, promoting preventive dental visits, and collaborating with dentists, healthcare providers can support early detection, improve diabetes management and enhance quality of life while lowering long-term costs. ^{3,4}

In 2022, the proportion of tooth loss was ***much higher*** among adults with diabetes at 64% compared to those without.¹



North Dakota Programs Supporting Diabetes Management and Oral Health

North Dakota Health and Human Services' Diabetes and Oral Health programs work together to highlight the connection between diabetes and oral health. Their efforts focus on encouraging regular dental checkups and effective blood sugar management to prevent complications, while also promoting healthy habits for overall well-being.

Program	Strategic Goals/Focus Areas
 North Dakota Diabetes Prevention Control Program (2023-2028)¹	- Strengthen self-care practices by improving access, appropriateness, and feasibility of diabetes self-management education and support services. - Improve acceptability and quality of care for people with or at risk of diabetes. - Increase enrollment and retention in the National and Medicare Diabetes Prevention Programs. - Support development of multi-directional e-referral systems to enhance electronic data exchange between health care providers and community-based organizations. - Promote integration of community health workers into diabetes care delivery. - Improve the capacity of the diabetes workforce to address social determinants of health.
 North Dakota Oral Health Program⁵	- Promote innovative, cost-effective approaches for oral health promotion and disease prevention. - Foster community and statewide partnerships to improve access to dental care. - Increase public awareness of the importance of preventive oral health care. - Identify and reduce oral health conditions in specific population groups. - Facilitate translation of new research into practical application.

More Information:

Find a dentist who takes ND Medicaid. Visit hhs.nd.gov/medicaid/health-tracks/families/dental
North Dakota Diabetes Prevention & Control Program | Health and Human Services North Dakota

Contact:

Oral Health Program at 701.328.4930, 711 (TTY).

Citations:

1. North Dakota 2022 Diabetes Report, prepared by the North Dakota Diabetes Prevention and Control Program, available at hhs.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/DOH%20Legacy/Diabetes/2022-nd-diabetes-report.pdf
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Diabetes program, 2022.
3. National Association for Chronic Disease Directors. Oral Health and Chronic Disease. 2024. 24-09-Oral-Health-and-Chronic-Disease-Pages-Lower-Res.pdf
4. Wanty, N. I., Long, C., Park, B. Z., McNeill, A. R., Malicoate, K., & Phelps, E. Oral medical care coordination: A systematic literature review and guide forward. KDH Research & Communication. Oral Medical Care Coordination | NACDD
5. North Dakota Oral Health Program, hhs.nd.gov/health/oral-health-program