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**JOURNEY FOR  
CONTROL**  
Advancing Diabetes Education

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## Healthy Steps You Can Smile About

More than 50% of adults are in at least the early stages of gum disease, and 90% get it sooner or later.

As a person with type 2 diabetes, your risk is even higher. High blood sugar can make your gums more likely to become infected. Then, in a vicious circle, gum infection can cause blood sugar to rise.

### What are the risks?

Gum disease can destroy your gums and the bone around your teeth. An early sign of gum disease is red, tender gums that occasionally bleed. As the condition gets worse, your gums move back, exposing more of your teeth. In time, pockets form and become infected. At this point, you may lose your teeth unless you have gum surgery. Without gum surgery, the infection can spread to the bone around your teeth, causing your teeth to shift or loosen. They may even fall out or need to be removed.

### What you can do

Help prevent harm to your gums and teeth by taking these steps:

- **Brush and floss your teeth at least twice a day.** Ask your dental hygienist to show you how to do both effectively. The goal is to remove plaque.
- **Visit your dentist at least twice a year.** Tell your dentist that you have diabetes.
- **Have your teeth cleaned at least twice a year.** When plaque stays put, it hardens into tartar. Only your dentist or dental hygienist can remove tartar with cleaning tools.
- **If you smoke, stop.**
- **Keep your blood sugar as close as possible to normal.**

For more information about diabetes, please visit [JourneyForControl.com](http://JourneyForControl.com).

