Oral Health and Diabetes in Michigan:
What Providers and Patients Need to Know

Diabetes in Michigan

Diabetes is a chronic disease characterized by high blood sugar caused by either a lack of insulin or the body's inability to use insulin efficiently. As of 2023, 12.4% of Michigan adults reported being diagnosed with diabetes[1] and it was the seventh leading cause of death.[2]

Diabetes and Oral Health are closely connected

High blood sugar makes it harder to fight mouth infections — raising the risk of gum disease and tooth loss. At the same time, poor oral health can make it harder to manage blood sugar.[4]

Regular dental care can support diabetes management, and good diabetes control helps protect oral health. In Michigan, only 2 out of 3 adults with diabetes saw a dental provider in the last year — a gap that puts many at risk for preventable issues.[3]

People with diabetes are also more likely to lose teeth. In Michigan, 62.2% of adults with diabetes have had teeth removed because of decay or gum disease, with 30.7% having had six or more teeth pulled.[3]

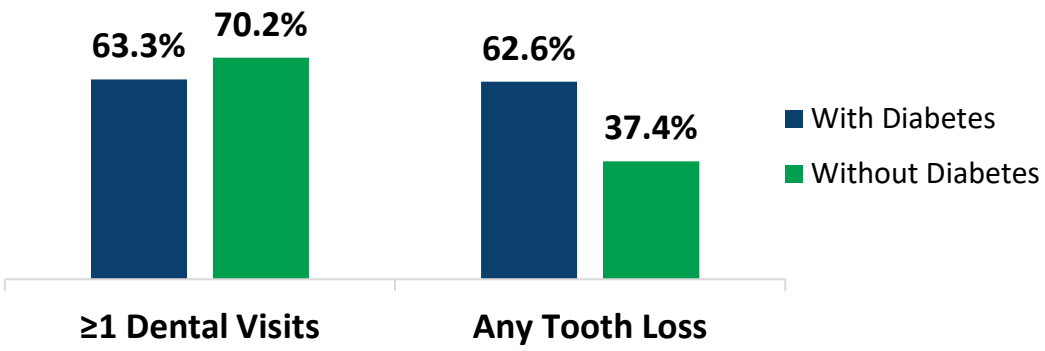
Did You Know?

12.4%
of Michigan adults have been diagnosed with diabetes.[1]

42.2%
of Black adults with diabetes did not have a dental visit in the last year.[3]

2 out of 3 adults
with diabetes have lost teeth due to decay or gum disease.[3]

Figure 1. **Dental Visits and Any Tooth Loss among Michigan Adults, 2022, by Diabetes Status[3]**



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What Patients Need to Know

- Schedule cleanings at least twice a year and ensure you let your dentist know you have been diagnosed with diabetes.
- Brush your teeth twice a day and floss regularly to prevent plaque and decay.
- Avoid smoking and limit alcohol to support your oral and overall health.
- Work with your medical team to manage your diabetes and stay up to date on checkups.
- If dentures are worn, dental checkups are still important. Remove dentures for cleaning daily.

What Providers Need to Know

Medical Professionals	Dental Professionals
• Provide education on oral hygiene and explain connections between oral health and diabetes. • Keep diabetes information materials in waiting and treatment areas. • Collaborate with dental providers on management of care. • Encourage regular dental visits.	• Monitor for signs of diabetes-related oral health problems. • Educate patients on importance of blood sugar control to prevent oral health issues. • Collaborate with medical providers to support integration of diabetes and dental care.

For more information, visit michigan.gov/oralhealth and michigan.gov/diabetes.

References:

[1] Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. 2023. Michigan Behavioral Risk-Factor Survey. (May 2025).

[2] Division for Vital Records & Health Statistics, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. 2023. Michigan Death Certificate Registry. https://www.mdch.state.mi.us/osr/deaths/causrankcnty.asp (Feb. 2025).

[3] Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. 2022. Michigan Behavioral Risk-Factor Survey. (July 2025).

[4] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2024. Diabetes and oral health. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/diabetes-complications/diabetes-and-oral-health.html (May 2024).

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