



Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey

Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey understands that my dentist can spot serious health risks like diabetes.



## Diabetes and Dental Care

**Although the exact cause of diabetes is a mystery, your dentist may be able to spot early signs of the disease.**

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone needed to convert sugar, starches and other food you consume into the energy you need for daily life. Research indicates that 29.1 million people in the United States have diabetes with more than 8 million people undiagnosed.

Early detection is important because when left untreated, diabetes can lead to other serious health complications such as kidney disease, heart disease, stroke, nerve damage and blindness. Dentists can play an important role in spotting undiagnosed diabetes and helping to manage the dental effects of the disease.

Uncontrolled diabetes impairs white blood cells, a main defense against bacterial infection. Because periodontal disease is a bacterial infection, people with uncontrolled diabetes are more likely to have it, and it is likely to be more severe.

Gum disease makes it more difficult for people with diabetes to control their blood sugar. So, controlling gum disease may help you control your diabetes. Let your dentist know if you have been diagnosed with diabetes and if it is under control.

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# People who have diabetes may have:

- Rapidly progressing periodontal (gum) disease.
- Gum inflammation.
- Dry mouth.
- Poor healing of oral tissues.
- Thrush.
- Burning mouth and/or tongue.

Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey gives you the tools to help you make smart health care decisions so you can better manage your health. If you have been diagnosed with diabetes, the **Chronic Care Program** may be able to help.\* For more information, call **1-888-345-1150**, Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., Eastern Time.

Sources: American Dental Association  
The American Diabetes Association

\* Not all programs are available to all members. Please check with your benefits administrator to determine if you are eligible for this service.

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