**Diabetes ‘The Hidden Disease’**

**What is Diabetes**
Diabetes mellitus describes a group of metabolic disorders characterised by chronic hyperglycaemia with disturbances of carbohydrate, fat and protein metabolism.

The disease is the result of defects in insulin secretion, insulin action or both.

**Classification types**

*Type 1* (5–10% of cases)
Results from autoimmune destruction of the beta cells of the pancreas that produce insulin, has a genetic predisposition (eg. Asian and Indian races) and viral infection trigger of autoimmunity.

*Type 2* (90–95% of cases)
Often patients show a resistance to insulin, sometimes impaired.

**Risk Factors for Type 2 diabetes**

- Age
- Obesity
- Family history of diabetes
- History of gestational diabetes
- Impaired glucose tolerance
- Physical inactivity
- Race/ethnicity

**Diabetes, Heart Disease and Periodontal Disease (gum disease)**

Diabetes Mellitus reduces the body’s capacity, in particular the immune system to fend off disease processes and maintain a healthy circulatory system.

With the rapid increase in the prevalence of type 2 diabetes in our communities dentist will be treating a number of known diabetics. A significant percentage of our patients will also be undiagnosed diabetics, in a pre-diabetic state or at risk of developing diabetes.

Diabetes, heart and periodontal disease are inextricably linked and largely preventable. People who are diabetic or in a pre-diabetic state need to control their condition both with medication, prevention through lifestyle, diet and adequate dental maintenance.

**Some of the oral signs and symptoms of Diabetes**

- Periodontal (gum) disease - often aggressive, mutiple recurrent periodontal abscesses. Bleeding gums.
- Sore tongue, burning mouth, Xerostomia (dry mouth) and caries.
- Candidal infections (eg thrush) particularly under dentures and angular cheilitis.
- Halitosis (bad breath)
- Bad taste/or metallic taste
- Sensitive teeth.
- Loose teeth / migration of teeth
- Food impaction
- Recession of the gums

**What can we do for you?**

People who feel they are at risk can now have a pre-diabetes (finger-prick) test through Complete Dental Care. This is a screening process and can let you know within 2 minutes whether or not you require further testing. An important requirement of doing the test is that you need to fast (no food but you may have water) for 12 hours prior to testing. This enables us to get an accurate reading of your risk level.
People who are diabetic require regular periodontal therapy, scaling and root planing to ensure their gums are in optimal health. Long term maintenance and compliance with diabetic control is very important. Remineralisation of your enamel with fluoride, if you are in a high risk category, is also carried out. Meticulous oral hygiene and tongue brushing are very important at controlling the bacteria accumulation in the mouth. Our hygienists can teach and monitor how this can be achieved in your mouth.