



TOOTHFULLY SPEAKING!

DR. PREETY DESAI

November is Diabetes Awareness Month

I was recently going through airport security in the US on my way to a dental meeting and witnessed an interesting event. The passenger ahead of me was literally strip searched and put through the ringer as his carryon was "identified" containing a syringe, needles and ampules of an "unknown" substance. The passenger repeatedly insisted that he was a diabetic and needed to have his insulin in close proximity and presented a physician's note confirming this. To no avail! his experience was by no means uncommon and will certainly be more frequent in the future but hopefully without the security issues!

Diabetes is THE disease of the 21st century! Nine percent (9%) of Canadians are diagnosed with diabetes and it is surmised that this is a 20% under estimation. What is commonly known is that diabetics are 3X more likely to be hospitalized with cardiovascular disease, 12X more likely to be hospitalized with end-stage renal disease, and almost 20X more likely to be hospitalized with non-traumatic lower limb amputations! Diabetes are the primary cause of 34% of new cases of end-stage renal disease in 2009, creating a growing demand for kidney transplants in Canada ...

What is less commonly known is that "Periodontal disease is recognized as an independent risk factor for diabetes" according to Dr Jane Atkinson - head of the NIDCR in Bethesda, Maryland. Diabetics are 4X more likely to have gum disease because of their reduced immune and healing response. It is extremely important for diabetics to have excellent oral hygiene and regular professional cleanings.

Conversely, the presence of any gum infection can make it much more difficult for a diabetic to control their blood sugar. Diabetics without periodontal disease have shown 6X better blood sugar control versus diabetics with gum disease. Studies have also shown that the elimination of gum disease can directly improve a person's control over diabetes dramatically.

The results of a recent study showed that people with diabetes were 2X more likely to lose all of their teeth as people without diabetes. Those are huge ODDS! One of every five cases of edentulism (complete tooth loss) is linked to diabetes," the authors concluded. This is a catch 22 in that any number of teeth lost leads to fewer vegetables and proteins being consumed in one's diet. Thus there is more difficulty controlling blood sugars when carbohydrates are consumed, which are easier to masticate.

The word diabetes derives from the ancient Greek meaning "to pass through urine."

With the disease, abnormally high blood sugar glucose levels lead to high levels of glucose passing through to the urine. Glucose is the body's primary energy source and is controlled by the hormone insulin produced in the pancreas. With diabetes, high blood glucose levels form because of diminished production of insulin. High blood glucose level is called hyperglycemia. Signs of diabetes include excessive urine production, extreme thirst, blurred vision, unexplained weight loss, tiredness and stupor like a drunken state.

As already mentioned, diabetes and obesity are the THE diseases of the 21st century.

Both are associated with more tooth loss due to gum disease amongst many other chronic diseases. As the holiday season approaches and the festivities start to get scheduled into our evenings and weekends moderation is always the key to winning the race!

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