

# Oral Health and Diabetes: Why It Matters

In Wisconsin, 1 in 11 people have diabetes. Diabetes can lead to serious health complications, such as heart attack and stroke.<sup>[1]</sup> Keeping blood sugar levels healthy and maintaining good oral health is important for managing diabetes. Diabetes management and maintaining good oral health are closely tied, as people with diabetes are more likely to develop gum disease and gum disease can negatively impact a person's ability to control blood sugar levels.<sup>[2,3]</sup> Because of this, it is crucial that people with diabetes have access to routine dental care.

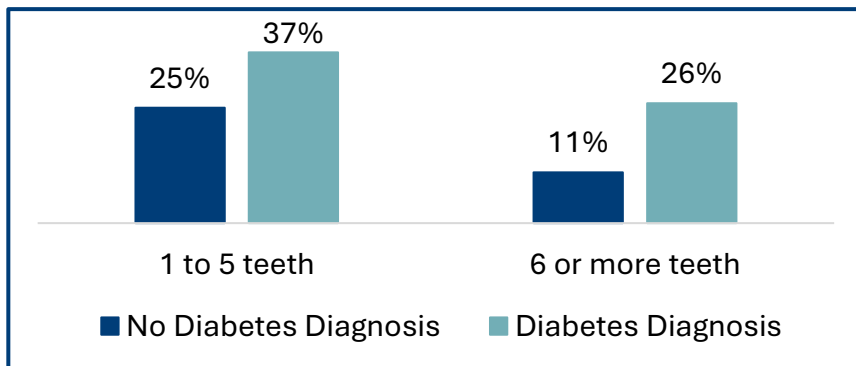
## Access to medical and dental care: there's a big gap

**94%** of adults with diabetes had a medical visit in the past year.



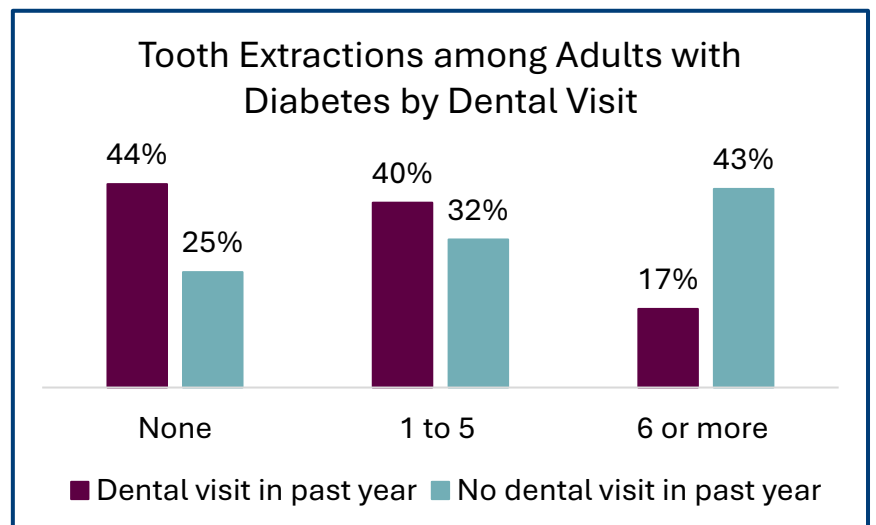
Only **66%** of adults with diabetes had a dental visit in the past year.

## Access to dental care can help prevent tooth extractions



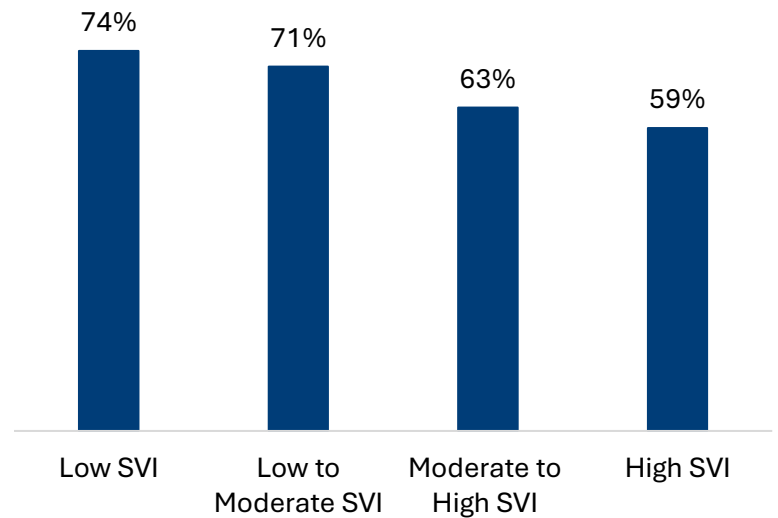
Adults with diabetes are **2x** more likely to have severe tooth loss (six or more teeth) due to gum disease or tooth decay.

The frequency of dental visits among adults with diabetes matters. Adults with diabetes who did not have a dental visit within the past year are more likely to report severe tooth loss due to gum disease or tooth decay. Tooth loss impacts quality of life including eating, speaking, working, pain, and more.



# Non-clinical factors can impact access to care

Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) focuses on non-clinical factors that can influence health by accounting for an area's socioeconomic status, household characteristics, demographics, housing type, and transportation.<sup>[4]</sup> Adults with diabetes living in counties with a **high** social vulnerability score are **less likely** to receive a dental visit within the past year compared to those living in counties a **low** social vulnerability score.



## Action items for medical and dental providers

Adults with diabetes are more likely to experience poor oral health outcomes and routine dental visits play a key role in reducing the risk of gum disease—a key factor in managing diabetes. Medical and dental providers play an essential role in breaking down health care silos. Engaging in opportunities to learn more about the connection between oral health and diabetes management and developing interprofessional connections are some of the initial steps that providers can take to help build a more interconnected health care delivery system.

## Additional Resources

1. <https://www.dhs.Wisconsin.gov/diabetes/index.htm>
2. <https://diabetes.org/health-wellness/keeping-your-mouth-healthy>
3. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00125-011-2342-y>
4. <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/place-health/php/svi/index.html>

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