

Dental care in dialysis and transplant patients

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Introduction

- ❖ good dental care is important for everyone, but especially for people with a kidney disease. Oral cavity and teeth infections can be a major problem for patients with chronic renal disease and transplant patients.
- ❖ chronic or stubborn infections create continuous inflammation, which is harmful. Dental cavities and gum diseases are chronic bacterial infections. In addition to causing pain, difficulty eating, and mouth odors, dental cavities and gum infections can contribute to other problems by fueling harmful chronic inflammation. Also, germs that cause cavities and gum disease don't stay put and may spread throughout the body, especially if your immune system is weak. Infections can be serious, even resulting in hospitalizations.
- ❖ a dental health exam is required as part of the kidney transplant evaluation process. Serious dental infections can delay, even prevent, being approved for a kidney transplant. This is because, after receiving a kidney, the medications used to prevent rejection of a transplant further weaken the body's defenses against infection. Therefore, prior to a transplant, patients are generally screened and treated for all infections, including dental, to prevent post-transplant complications. To help avoid any serious dental issues, preventing and quickly treating infections is essential! Excellent oral hygiene will remove bacteria that cause decay and gum disease.

To prevent infections it is necessary

- ❖ brush twice daily with a soft bristle brush and, ideally, floss once a day. "Thoroughly" is the key. Take your time. Three surfaces on each tooth need to be brushed, and the two side surfaces flossed.
- ❖ use a fluoridated toothpaste to help strengthen teeth against development of cavities. You may have a "dry mouth" as a side effect of some drugs used to treat kidney diseases. That makes it easier for cavities and gum diseases to develop.
- ❖ to increase saliva, try chewing sugarless gum or sucking on sugarless candy.



Conclusion

Regular dental exams, at least twice a year, can detect and treat cavities and gum disease before they become serious. Cleaning is helpful, too, by scraping away tartar that irritates the gums.

Full or partial dentures should be carefully cleaned daily and removed at night to prevent development of sore spots or ulcers.

