**Check your gums – this could be an early warning sign of type-2 diabetes**

**IF YOUR gums look like this you could be suffering from type-2 diabetes.**

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CHECK UP: A trip to the dentist could reveal a warning sign of diabetes

Diabetes affects approximately 422 million people worldwide and this number is expected to increase, according to the latest data.

And while most people with type-1 diabetes are born with it, type-2 can come on at any time.

Diabetes is a lifelong condition that causes a person's blood sugar level to become too high. With type-2 diabetes, the pancreas doesn't produce enough insulin or the body’s cells don't react to insulin.

The hormone insulin – produced by the pancreas – is responsible for controlling the amount of glucose in the blood.

If diabetes is left untreated the glucose starts to build up in the blood instead of heading straight for the cells. If the blood sugar gets too high or too low, health complications arise.

This is why it’s so important to catch type-2 diabetes early. But what are the common signs?

[Common symptoms of type-2 diabetes include excessive thirst, hunger, mood changes](http://www.dailystar.co.uk/ype-2%20diabetes)and feeling like you constantly need to pee.

But new research, published in the journal BMJ Open Diabetes Research & Care, suggests periodontitis might also be an early sign of diabetes.GETTY

HEALTH: Diabetes affects approximately 422 million people worldwide

Periodontitis is more commonly known as gum disease and leads to inflammation of the gums, which usually takes the form of redness, swelling and a tendency to bleed during brushing.

It is caused by certain bacteria (known as periodontal bacteria) and by the local inflammation triggered by those bacteria.

Researchers from the University of Amsterdam in The Netherlands assessed a total of 313 participants from a dental clinic at the university.

Of these, 126 patients had mild-to-moderate gum disease, 78 patients had severe periodontitis, and 198 individuals did not have signs of gum disease.

Findings revealed that the most diabetes cases were found among those with periodontitis.

In the group with severe gum disease 23% of people were suspected of diabetes, compared to just 14% of those with mild-to-moderate gum disease.

Only 10% of those with no gum disease had suspected diabetes.

SYMPTOM: Unquenchable thirst is often one of the first signs of diabetes

"[The findings confirm] the assumption that severe periodontitis could be an early sign of undiagnosed diabetes,” said the author of the study.

Participants with periodontitis also had a higher body mass index (BMI), with an average BMI of 27, high blood pressure and higher cholesterol.