

Keeping Mom and Baby Healthy

Expecting mothers have a lot to think about during pregnancy, but one thing that shouldn't be put on the back burner is their oral health.

Changing hormone levels can make pregnant women more susceptible to oral health problems like periodontal (gum) disease. Hormonal changes can cause an increase in blood flow to the gums, resulting in inflammation, sensitivity, and bleeding.¹ Pregnant women with untreated gum disease may be at a higher risk for premature deliveries and low birthweight. In addition, serious dental problems can develop further including tooth decay and tooth loss.² Because pregnancy involves the health of two, taking extra care of teeth and gums during pregnancy is essential.

Visiting the dentist while pregnant is important and safe. Tell your dentist you're expecting and the due date, as well as any changes in your oral health. Also, brush with fluoride toothpaste two times a day, floss once a day, and eat a nutritious diet.

Being proactive about your oral health before, during, and after pregnancy will help keep you and your little one healthy.



Quick Bites

- Poor oral health can increase the risk of spreading bacteria from the mother to her baby.
- Don't skip necessary dental treatments. More serious problems can occur later if left untreated.
- Tell your dentist about any medications or supplements you are taking, as you may need to be prescribed medication for any infections.
- Morning sickness can trigger vomiting, so rinse your mouth with a teaspoon of baking soda in a cup of water to prevent digestive acids from attacking your teeth.
- Use a soft-bristled toothbrush to reduce gum irritation.
- Schedule at least one dental visit while you're pregnant.

Did you know?

Between 60 and 75 percent of women will develop gingivitis during pregnancy.³

1. American Pregnancy Association. Pregnancy and Swollen Gums (Also known as Pregnancy Gingivitis), americanpregnancy.org/pregnancyhealth/swollengums.html, accessed June 2013.

2. American Dental Association. Oral Health During Pregnancy: What to expect when expecting, www.ada.org/sections/scienceAndResearch/pdfs/forthedentalpatient_may_2011.pdf, accessed May 2013.

3. CDA Foundation. Oral Health During Pregnancy and Early Childhood: Evidence-Based Guidelines for Health Professionals, www.cdafoundation.org/portals/0/pdfs/poh_guidelines.pdf, accessed June 2013.