

EXPECTING? CONSIDER THE EVIDENCE:

Few things hold greater value than the birth of a healthy baby. Because a number of studies have indicated an association between periodontal disease in mothers and deliveries of preterm, low-birthweight infants, Delta Dental encourages that pregnant women showing signs of periodontal disease receive adequate dental cleanings during pregnancy. These services may range from routine dental prophylaxis to scaling and root planing, depending on the condition of the mother's oral health.

The physical and economic costs of preterm infants is great. They are at an increased risk for a number of serious health complications, including chronic lung disease, severe brain injury, motor and sensory impairment, learning difficulties and behavioral problems. These children often require significantly greater family practitioner services, education services and social services than infants born at term or normal birthweight. The economic impact associated with the perinatal period, as well as throughout life can be substantial.

A summary of studies on the association between periodontal disease and deliveries of preterm low-birthweight infants indicates that the majority of these studies show an association. Various studies indicate that pregnant women who have periodontal disease range from 3.5 to 7 times more likely to deliver preterm, low-birthweight children.

Recent studies also indicate that treatment for periodontal disease may reduce the incidence of preterm low-birthweight infants. An American study showed a 28 percent reduction for low-income African American and Hispanic women when periodontal disease was treated, while a Chilean study of low-income women found an 82 percent reduction.

Although further studies are continuing to explore the link between periodontal disease and preterm low birthweight as well as the outcome of periodontal treatment during pregnancy, the potential health ramifications, quality of life and economic impact of the condition warrants taking reasonable precautions to reduce its incidence.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR MOUTH...
TAKE CARE OF YOUR BABY



“Providing added dental cleanings during pregnancy to reduce the risk of preterm low-birthweight babies is one way of improving health...”

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