



Oral
Wellness
Series

Oral Health and Pregnancy

Maintaining good oral care during pregnancy can keep you and your baby healthy. That's why, routine dental checkups are encouraged during pregnancies. Tell your dentist you're expecting and about any changes in your mouth.

Dental Concerns During Pregnancy

Pregnancy can actually make some dental problems worse, so good oral care is more important now than ever before. Be on the lookout for these common concerns:

- **Pregnancy Gingivitis.** Hormonal changes during pregnancy can increase your risk of gingivitis, a mild form of gum disease that causes redness, soreness, and occasional bleeding of the gums. Untreated gingivitis can lead to a more serious form of gum disease. Help prevent it by brushing and flossing regularly, and see your dentist if you notice any changes in your mouth.
- **Pregnancy Tumors.** In some women, tissue overgrowths called pregnancy tumors appear on the gums, most often during the second trimester. These noncancerous growths are usually found between the teeth and are believed to be related to excess plaque. Like pregnancy gingivitis, you can help prevent these by practicing good oral care.
- **Dental X-rays and Medications.** Your dentist can recommend safe medications to make dental treatment more comfortable. If you need dental X-rays, a leaded apron can help minimize exposure and keep you and your baby safe.
- **Morning Sickness.** Stomach acid can erode tooth enamel and lead to decay. To prevent erosion, avoid brushing your teeth right after illness. Instead, rinse with a teaspoon of baking soda mixed with water.

Maintaining Good Oral Health During Pregnancy

- Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice daily.
- Floss (or use an interdental cleaner) daily.
- Visit your dentist as you normally would if you weren't pregnant.
- Eat a healthy diet, and limit sweets.

What About Baby's Teeth?

Your baby's teeth begin to develop between the third and sixth month of pregnancy. This requires plenty of nutrients, especially vitamins A, C, and D, protein, calcium and phosphorus. Ensure baby's teeth are as healthy as possible by taking your prescribed prenatal vitamins and choosing nutritious snacks such as raw fruits and vegetables, yogurt and cheese.

Keeping your mouth healthy throughout your pregnancy sets you and your child up for a lifetime of healthy smiles — and it keeps you both healthy in many other ways.



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Resources
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More information can be found on the websites of the Academy of General Dentistry, [agd.org](https://www.agd.org), and the American Dental Association, [ada.org](https://www.ada.org); and in Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2000.

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MX3103429 • MEM-0370-0917

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