



Support your dental health during pregnancy

Keeping your mouth healthy during pregnancy is good for you and for your developing baby. HealthPartners is here to help with tips to keep you and baby healthy.

Monitor for pregnancy gingivitis

Preparation is a big part of pregnancy. Plan to take good care of your teeth and know the signs for dental plaque. It's that fuzzy feeling you get when you run your tongue across your teeth.

Dental plaque is a sticky bacterial film found on teeth with toxins that may irritate expectant mothers. It can cause gum tissue to be red, sore, and bleed. This condition is often referred to as pregnancy gingivitis.

Maintain a good oral health routine to help avoid pregnancy gingivitis:

- Brush at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste
- Floss once a day
- Maintain a balanced diet
- Schedule regular dental visits

Choose healthy eating

What you eat during pregnancy affects the development of your growing baby's teeth. Your baby's teeth begin to develop during the second trimester. Getting the right amounts of nutrients, including vitamins A, C and D, protein, calcium, folic acid and phosphorous support a healthy pregnancy.

Maintain good oral health during and after pregnancy:

- Eat a balanced diet and limit how often and how long you eat sticky, sugary and starchy snacks
- Choose nutritious foods, such as hard aged cheese, raw vegetables, plain yogurt or fruit
- Enjoy soft, sticky and sweet foods as part of a meal, which produces more saliva to protect teeth
- Brush after snacking and chew sugarless gum or xylitol-sweetened gum after meals if you can't brush

Fend off tooth decay

Many things contribute to more cavities during pregnancy. Gum tenderness may cause you to avoid brushing and flossing, resulting in tooth decay. Also, nausea and vomiting produce stomach acids that may harm tooth enamel and lead to an increased risk of cavities. Later in pregnancy, having a smaller stomach size may cause you to eat more frequently and expose teeth to greater risk of cavities.

Help avoid cavities with these tips:

- Drink fluoridated tap water
- Use fluoride toothpaste and an over-the-counter rinse, if recommended
- Limit frequent snacking and avoid soft drinks (both regular and diet sodas)

Visit the dentist during pregnancy

Continue to have regular dental visits throughout your pregnancy. Preventive oral hygiene appointments can generally be performed safely during pregnancy.

Keep these tips in mind when seeing your dentist:

- X-rays for your teeth are not harmful, but only the X-rays that are necessary for treatment should be taken
- Ask for a lead apron to wear over your abdomen during X-rays
- Elective procedures should be postponed until after you have your baby

Learn how medications affect you

Medications are a key concern for pregnant women. Some medications and anesthetics may be used during and after dental treatment to make procedures more comfortable. Only those medications that have minimal side effects will be used.

Keep these items in mind to help ensure you and baby stay healthy:

- Talk to your dentist about medications you're taking
- Let your dentist know about any changes in a physician-prescribed medication

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