



Tips For Better Dental Health During Pregnancy

GOOD FOR YOUR DENTAL HEALTH. GOOD FOR YOUR BABY.

Your body undergoes a number of changes during the course of your pregnancy, and your mouth is no exception. As one dentist explains, controlling dental disease during pregnancy is paramount. “Keeping your mouth healthy during your pregnancy is important for your health, and your baby’s,” says Dr. Pam Glassby, a dentist with the Vancouver Public Health Dental Program, Vancouver Coastal Health. “During pregnancy, morning sickness, craving for sugary foods and hormonal changes can begin to negatively impact your dental health. Bacteria in your mouth can transfer throughout your body with some research showing an association between periodontal (gum) disease and low birth weights.”

Sore, puffy and bleeding gums (commonly known as gingivitis) is a common issue for expectant mothers. “Many women experience an exaggerated inflammatory response during their pregnancy as a result of hormonal changes,” explains Dr. Tim Gould, a specialist in periodontics and co-director of Member Services at the British Columbia Dental Association. “This can irritate the gums causing them to bleed when brushed. Prompt diagnosis and treatment of gum disease can control the condition and lead to better health outcomes.”

Dr. Glassby agrees, “the more you can do to prevent and quickly address dental disease, the better.” A good place to start is by visiting your dentist. If you’re pregnant, or trying to get pregnant, consider scheduling an exam with your dentist. “Regular dental visits will help your dentist monitor for oral health issues as well as provide guidance for preventive care,” says Dr. Glassby. “Improving your dental health can have a positive effect on your overall health, your prenatal outcomes and your baby’s future oral health.”

Ensure you maintain a good personal dental care routine. Brush teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste; floss at least once a day.

If you are experiencing an exaggerated gag reflex your dentist may recommend a low foaming fluoride toothpaste and a toothbrush with a smaller head.

If you suffer from morning sickness, rinse your mouth with a mixture of water and baking soda to protect the tooth enamel.

Consider the foods you eat as well as when you eat them. For instance, limit foods containing sugar to mealtimes; choose water or low-fat milk over other beverages; and opt for a piece of fruit rather than fruit juice.

If you’re pregnant, or trying to get pregnant, visit your dentist for an examination. Your dentist will work with you to monitor the health of your mouth and can provide recommendations to minimize your risk of dental disease.

Always let your dentist know about any medication you may be taking.

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