



Pregnancy and Oral Health

Most pregnant women recognize how important their own health is for their baby's health, but many ignore a critical component – their oral health. Just like the rest of the body, a woman's mouth experiences changes during her pregnancy that require the guidance of an oral health professional. Dentists can help keep a woman and her baby healthy.

A dental check-up in the first trimester of pregnancy is an important chance for an oral health professional to clean and examine an expectant mother's mouth, and identify any concerns that need to be addressed related to their health or the health of their baby.

During pregnancy, women may experience the following conditions that directly impact oral health:

- **Morning sickness.** Around 80 percent of pregnant women experience morning sickness. This can affect an expectant mother's oral health as stomach acid erodes tooth enamel and can lead to tooth decay.
- **Gingivitis.** Hormonal changes during pregnancy can make a woman's gums react differently than normal to plaque, which can lead to gingivitis, the first stage of gum disease. If gingivitis is left untreated, it could lead to bone loss around the teeth. Studies have suggested that pregnant women with moderate to severe gum disease may be more at risk to deliver pre-term or low birth weight babies. Prevent or minimize gingivitis during pregnancy with good brushing and flossing habits to remove plaque.
- **Pregnancy tumors.** Pregnant women are at risk of developing pregnancy tumors, benign growths that arise out of swollen gums. Normally, the treatment is to leave them alone until they break on their own. However, if they interfere with eating or oral hygiene, they may have to be surgically removed.



Keep these oral health tips in mind during pregnancy

- Always brush teeth thoroughly twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Drink water or low-fat milk over carbonated beverages.
- Choose fruit rather than fruit juice to meet the recommended daily fruit intake.
- Rinse mouth with a water and baking soda solution after vomiting as a result morning sickness. Afterwards, brush teeth gently and chew Xylitol or sugar-free gum.
- Eat a well-balanced diet rich in vitamins and nutrients.
- Don't smoke.

Most importantly, pregnant women should let their dentist know they are pregnant, so that she or he can schedule dental work accordingly. If dental work is needed beyond a routine cleaning and exam, it is safest to have it done during the second trimester, especially if it requires the use of a topical or local anesthetic. Pregnant women should discuss any concerns with their dentist.

A dentist can help identify and treat teeth and gum problems, lowering the risk for more serious, ongoing health problems for an expectant mother and her baby. Pregnant women should remember their oral health in their daily routine and talk to their dentist or obstetrician if they experience changes to oral health during pregnancy.

Visit [truassure.com](http://www.truassure.com) for more oral health resources and information.