



Pregnancy and Oral Health

Most pregnant women recognize the important role their health plays in their baby's well-being, but many ignore a critical component – their oral health. Like the rest of your body, your mouth experiences changes during pregnancy that require the guidance of a health care professional.

A dental checkup in the first trimester allows an oral health professional to clean and examine your mouth, as well as identify any concerns that need to be addressed for your health *and* the health of your baby.

Conditions you may experience during pregnancy include:



Morning Sickness

Around 80 percent of pregnant women suffer from morning sickness. Stomach acids can erode tooth enamel and lead to tooth decay. To help neutralize the acids, rinse your mouth with a baking soda and water solution.



Hormonal Changes

Because of hormonal changes, gums may react differently to plaque. This can lead to gingivitis, the first stage of gum disease. If left untreated, gingivitis could lead to bone loss around the teeth. Studies suggest pregnant women with moderate to severe gum disease may be more at risk of delivering pre-term or low birth weight babies.



Pregnancy Tumors

These benign growths arise out of swollen gums. Normally, these tumors are left alone until they break on their own. However, if the tumors interfere with eating or oral hygiene, they may have to be surgically removed.

Keep these oral health tips in mind during pregnancy:



Always brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and **floss once daily**. Removing plaque can help prevent or minimize gingivitis.



Rinse your mouth with a water and baking soda solution after morning sickness. Also, **brush your teeth** gently and **chew Xylitol or sugar-free gum**.



Choose fruit rather than fruit juice to meet your recommended daily intake.



Drink water or low-fat milk instead of carbonated beverages.



Eat a well-balanced diet rich in vitamins and nutrients.



Refrain from smoking throughout your pregnancy.

Most importantly, make sure your dentist knows you are pregnant, so they can schedule dental work accordingly. It's safest to have dental work done during the second trimester, especially if it requires the use of a topical or local anesthetic. A dentist can also help identify and treat teeth and gum problems, lowering the risk for more serious, ongoing health conditions for you and your baby. **Talk to your dentist or obstetrician if you have any concerns or you experience changes to your oral health during pregnancy.**

For more information visit
www.deltadentalnm.com/Wellness/Oral-Health-News.aspx