



Can Pregnancy Affect My Oral Health?

Oral health during pregnancy

Keeping your teeth and gums healthy during pregnancy has many benefits for you and your baby.

Your body undergoes many changes during pregnancy. Some of these can affect the health of your gums and teeth:

- Changes in your hormone levels can cause swollen gums that bleed during brushing and flossing (pregnancy gingivitis).
- The risk of having a premature or low-birth-weight baby may be reduced if you have healthy gums and teeth.
- Morning sickness can leave stomach acids in your mouth. These acids can damage the surface of the teeth and promote tooth decay.

You can help yourself

Taking care of your oral health is always a good idea. While pregnant, there are particular things you can do to help:

- Keep your mouth clean. Brush twice each day using a fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss daily to remove plaque from between your teeth and gums.
- Eat healthy, nutritious food.
- Try eating dry toast or unsalted crackers before getting out of bed in the morning to help prevent morning sickness.
- If you do vomit, rinse your mouth with water or a fluoride mouth rinse. Rinsing helps protect your teeth from damaging stomach acids.



- If you have any questions about your oral health, ask your dentist or hygienist.

Dentists provide special care to pregnant women

Your dentist and dental hygienist have special training to look after your oral health while you are pregnant. It is best to arrange a visit in the middle three months of your pregnancy.

- Tell your dentist that you are pregnant.
- Regular dental cleanings and check-ups before, during and after your pregnancy are important.
- Put off routine x-rays until after your pregnancy.
- If your dentist recommends dental x-rays, the dental office will provide a leaded apron to shield you and your baby from the low dose of radiation used.
- Avoid taking drugs or medications while pregnant. If emergency dental treatment requires that you take drugs, be sure to discuss their use with your dentist and physician.

For more information call the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit at 519-426-6170 Ext. 3293, 905-318-6623 Ext. 3293 or 519-582-3579 Ext. 3293.

Based on materials developed by the City of Ottawa, People Services Department.

For more information contact the Dental Program of the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit at 519-426-6170 / 905-318-6623.

Updated April 2017.

