



DENTAL HEALTH DURING PREGNANCY

There are many myths about dental health and pregnancy. Although there is a lot to think about during pregnancy, oral health should not be neglected.

During pregnancy, follow these tips to improve your dental health:

- Nutrition is very important during pregnancy because your baby gets nutrients from your system. Select foods that are rich in nutrients such as calcium and vitamin D, and low in sugar. By eating right, you can start caring for your baby's teeth as soon as you find out you are pregnant. Your doctor can give you information to help you eat well during pregnancy.¹
- Some pregnant women have dental problems due to hormonal changes that can make gums become sore, swell, and bleed. Prevent bleeding gums by brushing and flossing teeth daily. Having your teeth cleaned by a dental hygienist or dentist early in your pregnancy may help prevent most gum problems.²
- Some women develop a "pregnancy tumor" on their gums. This is usually a painless bump on the gums (usually between the teeth) that can be pink, red, or purple. It will usually not cause any problems, but care should be taken to keep the area clean. Also schedule a dental appointment, especially if the area becomes enlarged, dark red or bluish, and is hard to keep clean.³ The tissue will usually decrease in size after birth, but sometimes a dentist must remove it.
- Dental problems can also be caused by frequent snacking. Select foods that are beneficial to you and your baby. To prevent cavities, eat sweets at the end of a meal instead of between meals.⁴
- It is important to see your dentist and dental hygienist during pregnancy to prevent dental problems. Be sure to make a dental appointment before your baby is born. After birth, it may be several months before you will be able to find the time for an appointment.²
- If you require emergency dental care during your pregnancy, x-rays may be needed of your teeth. Always inform dentists and dental care professionals if you are pregnant. Limit or avoid nitrous oxide, some prescribed antibiotics, and some pain medications. Your dentist can contact your obstetrician with any questions.³

For more information, contact the Division of Public Health, Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services, at 302-744-4554 and www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/hsm/ohphome.html.

[See also "Pregnancy" under Woman's Oral Health.](#)

24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

Revised: 07/2016

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1. American Dental Association. 2014. *Nutrition*. In Mouth Healthy. Retrieved February 12, 2015 from: <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/pregnancy/nutrition/>
2. American Dental Association. 2014. *Pregnancy*. In Mouth Healthy. Retrieved February 12, 2015 from: <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/pregnancy>
3. American Dental Association. 2014. *Pregnancy Concerns*. In Mouth Healthy. Retrieved February 12, 2015 from: (<http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/pregnancy/concerns>
4. American Dental Association. 2014. *Nutrition tips for pregnancy*. In Mouth Healthy. Retrieved February 12, 2015 from: <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/nutrition/Nutrition-Tips-for-Pregnancy>