

Pregnancy and Dental Care

Frequently Asked Questions

Should I go to the dentist during my pregnancy?

Yes, seeing your dentist and/or dental hygienist during your pregnancy is very important as there are many benefits for you and your baby. Tell your dentist that you are pregnant so special care is taken. Certain precautions can be observed.

How does seeing my dentist benefit me during my pregnancy?

During pregnancy your body undergoes many changes which can affect your oral health for example; stomach acids in your mouth caused by morning sickness can damage the surface of the teeth and promote tooth decay. Also, changes in your hormone level can cause pregnancy gingivitis (swollen gums that bleed while brushing and flossing).

Should I have x-rays while I am pregnant?

Routine dental x-rays are often put off during pregnancy. If your dentist recommends x-rays however, you would be covered by a lead apron to shield you and your baby from the low dose of radiation.

When is the best time to arrange a dental appointment during pregnancy?

In the middle three months of your pregnancy is the best time to arrange a dental appointment.

I heard that mothers with gum disease are more likely to have pre-term low birth weight babies. Is this true?

There have been studies linking the two. The theory behind the connection is that periodontal infections provide a pathway for plaque bacteria to enter the bloodstream. This in turn causes inflammation which has been associated with pre-term labor and low birth weight babies. Thus, having healthy gums and teeth will reduce the risk of premature or low birth weight babies. Having your teeth professionally cleaned may significantly reduce your risk.

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Tips

During your pregnancy the best way to avoid gum disease and periodontal problems is by practicing excellent oral hygiene. Below is a checklist of items that will help you while you are pregnant.

- Brush at least twice a day using fluoride toothpaste recommended by the CDA
- Floss Daily
- Eat a healthy, well balanced diet of nutritious foods
- Schedule regular dental visits and professional teeth cleanings
- Before getting out of bed in the morning try eating dry toast or unsalted crackers to prevent morning sickness. If you do vomit, rinse your mouth with a fluoride mouth rinse or water which will help protect your teeth from damaging stomach acids.
- While pregnant, avoid taking any unnecessary drugs or medications. If emergency dental treatment presents and you are required to take drugs, be sure to discuss their use with your dentist and physician.

Sources:

“Pregnancy and Dental Care” <http://www.peidental.ca/pregfaq.html>, Province of PEI Dental Public Health. February 2007

“Oral health during pregnancy” <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/early/pregnancy.html>, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, February 2007.