

Protect your
baby's teeth
during pregnancy



A wellness publication prepared for members of
InterCommunity Health Network CCO

OUR MEMBERS. OUR NEIGHBORS.

InterCommunity Health Network CCO

2300 NW Walnut Blvd., Corvallis

Keeping your mouth healthy is the first step to keeping your baby's mouth healthy.



Pregnancy and dental care

During pregnancy you are more likely to have problems with your teeth or gums. Hormonal changes during pregnancy can cause some women to develop a condition known as pregnancy gingivitis, a type of gum disease. It is an inflammation of the gums that can cause swelling, tenderness and bleeding. This can affect the health of your growing baby.

- Pregnancy gingivitis happens in over half of pregnant women.
- Gum disease in pregnant women may be a risk factor for premature delivery and low birth weight babies.
- It is important and safe to see your dentist for cleanings and regular checkups while you are pregnant.

Cavity prevention for your baby **begins during pregnancy**

- The first stage of tooth development begins in the fetus (growing baby) at about 6 weeks of age.
- If your teeth are healthy, it is more likely your child's teeth will be healthy.
- If you have untreated cavities or gum disease, your child is more likely to get cavities.
- By lowering the amount of cavity-causing bacteria in your mouth, you lower the chance of spreading the bacteria to your child.
- What you eat during pregnancy affects the development of your child's teeth.





Caring for your teeth

Brushing

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Replace your toothbrush every three or four months. Replace sooner if the bristles are frayed. A worn out toothbrush will not do a good job of cleaning your teeth.
- If you have morning sickness and vomit often, try rinsing your mouth with a teaspoon of baking soda mixed with water to protect your teeth from stomach acid.

Flossing

- Floss your teeth at least once a day.
- Flossing your teeth removes food pieces and plaque from in between your teeth that a toothbrush can not reach.
- Plaque causes cavities and can lead to gum disease.

Dental checkups

- Go to your dental checkup appointment even if you are pregnant.

DENTAL CHECK-UP

CHECKLIST

- Let your dentist know how far along you are in your pregnancy when you make your appointment.
- Tell your dentist about any medical advice you have received from your health care provider.
- Tell your dentist the names and dosages of all medications you are taking. Certain drugs can affect the development of your child's teeth and should not be taken during pregnancy.
- Avoid dental X-rays during pregnancy. If you need X-rays your dentist will be careful to keep you and your baby safe. Advances in technology have made X-rays much safer today than in the past.
- If you have tenderness, bleeding or swollen gums at any time during your pregnancy, talk with your dentist as soon as possible.

Eating during pregnancy

What you eat when you are pregnant will have an effect on the development of your baby's teeth. Here are some important things to remember:

- Limit snacking. When you do snack, choose foods that are low in sugar and full of nutrients for you and your baby, like fruits, vegetables, yogurt and cheese.
- Eat fewer foods high in sugar. The bacteria in your mouth use sugar to make acid. This acid can eat away at your teeth and cause cavities.
- Drink water or milk instead of juice or soda.
- Ask your health care provider about prenatal vitamins or other supplements that may be right for you.
- Eat a balanced diet with a variety of foods that have Calcium, Vitamin A, Beta Carotene, Vitamin C and Vitamin D.



FOOD FOR BABY'S TEETH

Calcium

Creates strong bones and teeth, helps prevent blood clots, helps muscle and nerve function.

Found in: Yogurt, milk, cheese, calcium-added foods like soy milk, juices, breads, cereals, dark green leafy vegetables, canned fish with bones

Vitamin A & Beta Carotene

Helps bones and teeth grow.

Found in: Milk, eggs, liver, carrots, spinach, broccoli, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, yellow fruits, cantaloupe

Vitamin C

Important for tissue repair, wound and bone healing and healthy skin. Helps baby to build strong bones and teeth.

Found in: Citrus fruits, bell peppers, green beans, strawberries, papaya, potatoes, broccoli, tomatoes

Vitamin D

Helps the body use calcium for strong teeth and bones.

Found in: Milk, fatty fish such as salmon



Below are some resources on mouth care for pregnant women.

RESOURCES

Oregon Department of Human Services

www.public.health.oregon.gov

On left-hand side, click on "Prevention and Wellness."

Next click on "Oral Health."

Then, click on "Care and Prevention."

Mouth Healthy - American Dental Association

America's Leading Advocate for Oral Health

www.mouthhealthy.org/pregnancy

InterCommunity Health Network-CCO Customer Service

Corvallis: 541-768-4550

Toll-free: 1-800-832-4580

TTY: 1-800-735-2900

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.