



Your mouth is talking. *Are you listening?*

Let's face it

Pregnancy can be tough on your body – including your teeth and gums. Problems in your mouth can affect **your health and your baby's**. So take special care during this special time. And please don't skip that dental visit. **YOUR MOUTH**

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Oral Health During Pregnancy

Pregnancy brings a lot of changes to your body, and your mouth is no exception. These changes can affect your oral health, and poor oral health can affect your baby. The Missouri Dental Association (MDA) offers the following tips to help ensure that all you pass on from your mouth to your baby is a smile.

- **YOUR TEETH** Pregnant women tend to snack more, and, depending on the types of food (such as those high in sugar), this can lead to an increased risk for tooth decay. It is especially essential during this time to get enough calcium. While your baby will not take calcium from your teeth, you still need calcium for your body, plus extra calcium for your developing baby. Eat fresh fruits and vegetables, take prenatal vitamins, brush and floss twice a day and visit your dentist every six months. Dental care and treatment during pregnancy is safe for both you and baby.

- **GUM DISEASE** About half of all pregnant women develop pregnancy gingivitis or swelling of the gums. This tends to begin during the second month of pregnancy and peaks during the eighth month. While it usually tapers off once the baby is born, it's important not to ignore it because oral bacteria can impact the baby. Symptoms of gum disease include mouth sores, bleeding when brushing or flossing or gums that are bright red or red-purple in color, tender when touched or puffy or shiny in appearance. Talk to your dentist if you experience any of these symptoms.

Research is not conclusive, but there have been studies linking poor oral health in pregnant women to premature birth and low birth weight.

- **YOUR BABY'S TEETH** Be sure to get enough calcium and vitamins in your diet to help develop your baby's teeth. As soon as the baby arrives, start caring for his or her gums by wiping them with a clean, soft washcloth after each feeding. Keep it up when those adorable first teeth appear. Of course, formula and milk are good for baby, but they do contain sugar that can cause tooth decay if it sits on teeth for a long time. Cleaning with a washcloth or infant toothbrush removes sugary liquids and foods that can cause tooth decay and helps your baby get used to having the mouth cleaned and checked. Plan a dental visit around the baby's first birthday. Visit YourMouthIsTalking.org for more information on oral health and early childhood.

SOURCES

Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, American Academy of Periodontology, WebMD Medical Reference

Brush, floss and visit your MDA dentist.

For more on what your mouth is trying to tell you, visit YourMouthIsTalking.org.