

Information for Baby

Oral Care for Babies

Before teeth appear, use damp gauze or a clean wash cloth to gently wipe baby's gums and cheeks after feeding.

When teeth appear, brush twice daily with a soft toothbrush using a rice-sized grain of fluoride toothpaste.

Early Childhood Tooth Decay can occur in babies and young children.

Babies are not born with decay-causing bacteria. Bacteria from parent's saliva is passed to baby by:

- sharing utensils
- cleaning pacifier in mouth, and
- wet kisses.

To reduce the risk:

- Feeding by breast and later by cup is best for baby.
- For thirst between meals, water is best.
- Pacifiers should not be dipped in anything sweet.
- If your baby must sleep with a bottle, use only water.

Taking a bottle to bed is not recommended.

First Dental Visit

The Canadian Dental Association recommends that children see a dentist by their first birthday.

For more information, contact:

Oral Health Program

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START RIGHT

Oral health for moms-to-be and baby

Strong baby teeth start with you!



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Raising Healthy Kids

OH-PS-002 July 2015

Important Facts

Your baby's teeth begin to form early in pregnancy.

What you eat now affects your child's tooth development. Poor nutrition, stress, illness and antibiotic use can lead to enamel defects and increased risk of tooth decay.

Keep teeth and gums healthy.

With proper care, teeth and gums can stay healthy during pregnancy. Here are some tips:

- Brush morning and night for at least two minutes and floss daily. If you vomit, rinse your mouth with water or a fluoride mouthwash as stomach acids can damage teeth.
- Eat a balanced diet. Limit snacking on foods that contain sugars and starches (sticky, sweet foods).
- Avoid prolonged sipping of beverages containing sugars or acids (pop, sport drinks, juices, etc.); they are harmful to teeth.
- Chew sugar-free gum or rinse if unable to brush.
- Replace your toothbrush about every three months.

Tooth Decay

Caused by repeated acid attacks on teeth—**not from repeated pregnancies.**

The decay process begins with the plaque that is always forming on teeth. The bacteria in plaque use sugars and starches from food to make damaging acids that attack teeth.

Gum disease may be linked to an increased risk of premature and low birth weight babies.

During pregnancy, hormonal changes may make your gums more **sensitive** to plaque.

Bacteria in plaque can make gums red, puffy, tender and more likely to bleed easily; this condition is called **Gingivitis.**

Gingivitis may lead to a more serious gum disease called **Periodontitis**, which attacks the bones that hold the teeth in the jaw.



Dental Visits During Pregnancy

Regular dental visits should continue. Tell your dentist you are pregnant. If treatment is necessary, the fourth to sixth month of pregnancy may be the best time.



Medications

Some antibiotics, including Tetracycline, can permanently stain a baby's teeth if taken during pregnancy. Check with your doctor about side effects.

X-Rays

Routine x-rays are generally avoided during pregnancy unless it is an emergency. If they are required, a lead apron should be worn to protect your baby from exposure to radiation.