

WHAT DOES YOUR ORAL HEALTH MEAN FOR YOUR BABY?

New research shows that pregnant women who have gum disease are more likely to have babies born before their due dates, and more likely to have low birth weight babies. Low birth weight babies are born before the 9th month and weigh less than 5 pounds 8 ounces.

The germ that causes gum infection can travel through your blood stream to places far from your mouth, even into the uterus (womb) Chemicals produced by the germs might cause early labor, which might cause your baby to be born too soon.

Every year as many as 45,500 premature (early) births may be caused by gum disease. That is 18% of the 250,000 early term babies born every year. Gum disease causes more early term births than smoking and alcohol use together

As you make your way through the “to do list” for your pregnancy, remember to check off a visit to the hygienist or dentist. Your good oral health can make a difference to your baby!

WHAT EVERY PREGNANT WOMAN SHOULD KNOW

How your oral health can affect the well-being of your unborn baby

Oral Health Awareness Colorado!
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South PSD-OH-A4
Denver, CO 80246-1530
Phone (303) 692-2569
Fax (303) 782-5557

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WHAT TO EXPECT IN YOUR ORAL HEALTH WHEN YOU ARE PREGNANT

When you are pregnant you will have many changes in your body, and will also have changes in your oral health. The hormone changes that occur during pregnancy cause more reaction to the normal germs in your mouth, and you may have more gum swelling, bleeding and a change of gum color from pink to red.

“Pregnancy gingivitis” is a gum disease that often happens in the second or third month of pregnancy and can become worse up through the eighth month. Until recently, doctors and dentists didn’t worry too much about this disease because they thought that when the baby was born, it would go away. However, now there is new information and a new reason to pay attention to your oral health.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Since your oral health can make a difference in your pregnancy, it is **very important that you watch for signs of gum disease.**

Brush and Floss at least twice a day!

It is important to have at least one dental cleaning when you are pregnant. Go to the dentist as early as you can in your pregnancy. It is also important to brush and floss at least twice a day.

- **Stop eating sugar and foods that have sugar in them (soda, sugar cereal, desserts and others)**
- **Eat foods high in calcium and vitamin C. (oranges and other citrus fruit, broccoli and other green vegetables)**
- **Stop Smoking.**

If your gums swell, bleed or hurt at any time during your pregnancy, see your dentist or hygienist as soon as you can.

WHAT TO TELL YOUR DENTAL PROFESSIONAL

- Is your pregnancy high-risk?
- In which month of pregnancy are you?
- Have you noticed any changes in your oral health?
- Are you taking any medicines? Are you taking medicine for Diabetes?
- Have you noticed any swelling, redness, or bleeding of your gums?
- Have you noticed any loose teeth?

Taking care of your teeth and gums when you are pregnant will help your baby to be born when it is due and at a healthy weight.

Good health starts with a smart mouth, take care of yours, so you can take care of your baby’s.