
Pregnancy and Oral Health

Pregnancy is a Time for Smiling!

Pregnancy is a time to be careful about all aspects of your health. Good oral health and nutrition are particularly important during pregnancy. Pregnant women are advised to quit using tobacco (smoking, spit tobacco), stop drinking alcohol and to take drugs only when prescribed by a doctor.

Hormonal changes during pregnancy can increase the risk of developing gum disease. Practice the same mouth care routine as you would ordinarily, however:

- Brush and floss with extra care twice a day using fluoridated toothpaste.
- Morning sickness can occur between the eighth and twelfth week of pregnancy. It can cause tooth decay because stomach acids left on teeth can damage the teeth. Rinse with water or a fluoride mouthrinse as soon as possible after vomiting.
- Have a regular dental exam and cleaning at least once during your pregnancy and tell them that you are pregnant and your due date. Dental x-rays are safe if needed or you can choose to wait until after the baby is born.
- Limit snacks containing high amounts of sugar or starch, as these can be harmful for your teeth. If you want a sugary treat, make sure to have it with meals.

What if my gums bleed during pregnancy?

Pregnancy gingivitis can be a normal part of pregnancy. During pregnancy, the increased circulation and fluids may cause an increased blood flow to your gums causing a slight increase in bleeding to the gums. It usually appears during the third to ninth month of pregnancy.

Continue to brush and floss normally and if you experience discomfort or pain, see your Oral Health Professional immediately.

Advanced Gum Disease

If you have severe gum disease when pregnant it is important to see a dentist. A thorough cleaning of your teeth and gums is necessary to improve your oral health and to reduce the number of decay causing germs in your mouth. Women with severe gum disease are at higher risk of having a premature or low birth weight baby.

Diet and Baby's Teeth

A mother's diet can affect the way her baby's teeth develop. The baby's teeth begin to form as early as the fifth week of pregnancy.

It is important that you get enough calcium, protein, phosphorous and vitamins A, C and D when your baby's teeth are forming.

Take your prenatal multivitamin daily to ensure your growing baby develops strong health teeth.

Eat a balanced diet. Enjoy a variety of foods from "*Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*" such as grain products, vegetables and fruit, milk products, meat and alternatives

- eat regularly; three meals and two or three healthy snacks every day
- avoid constant snacking and sipping on foods and beverages with high sugar content.

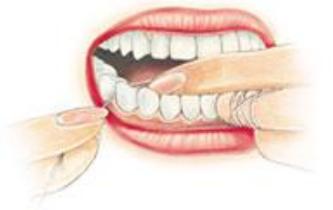
Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco should not be used during pregnancy. Nearly all drugs can pass from mother to the developing baby. Before taking any drugs check with your pharmacist or call Saskatchewan Consumer Drug Information Service at 1-800-665-3784.

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How To Floss Your Teeth



Wrap floss around middle fingers (about half an arms length)



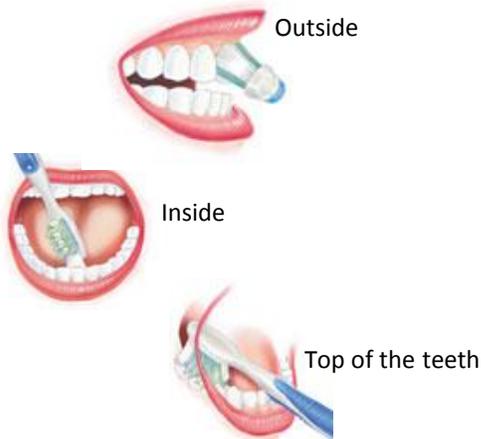
Gently guide floss between teeth



Move floss up and down, sliding under gumline, on both adjacent teeth

How To Brush Your Teeth

Angle the toothbrush bristles towards your gums. Gently brush back and forth with short, vibrating motions on all sides of your teeth.



Remember to brush your tongue.

Transmission

Never share toothbrushes or allow toothbrushes to touch each other in a container. This spreads disease, including germs that cause tooth decay. Babies are not born with these decay causing germs. They are passed from caregivers to babies through kissing and sharing utensils, like spoons. Cleaning the pacifier by putting it in the caregiver's mouth is also a transmission route.

The more germs that caregivers have in their mouths, the more germs will be passed on to the babies. This can increase the risk of early childhood tooth decay. When the caregiver's mouth is clean and free of dental disease, the caregiver and baby will benefit.

Morning Sickness

If you have a strong gag reflex when brushing or are experiencing nausea, try the following:

- do the most thorough brushing at a time of day when you feel your best, not when your gag reflex is at its peak
- lean your head forward while brushing to minimize anything in the back of your throat
- use a tongue cleaner for your tongue or choose a smaller-sized toothbrush to help reach the back molars easier without triggering your impulse to gag
- chew sugarless gum to increase the amount of saliva in your mouth which helps stop the nausea that may be common in the first three months of pregnancy.
- try eating unsalted crackers or dry toast as a snack before getting out of bed in the morning; try getting out of bed slowly
- notify your doctor if vomiting persists or if you become concerned.

For more information, call the Oral Health Program at 306-655-4462, or contact us at oralhealthprogram@saskhealthauthority.ca.
