

Dental Health and Pregnancy



Dental (teeth, gum and mouth) health is an important part of your prenatal care. Pregnancy can increase the risk of oral health problems because of:

- Increase in pregnancy hormones
 - Common ones are progesterone (pro GEST a Rone) and estrogen (EST ro Gen).
- Changes in how and what you eat.
- Changes how often you brush and floss your teeth
 - Could be because of feeling sick to your stomach, throwing up or feeling tired.
- Teeth are exposed to stomach acid when you throw up

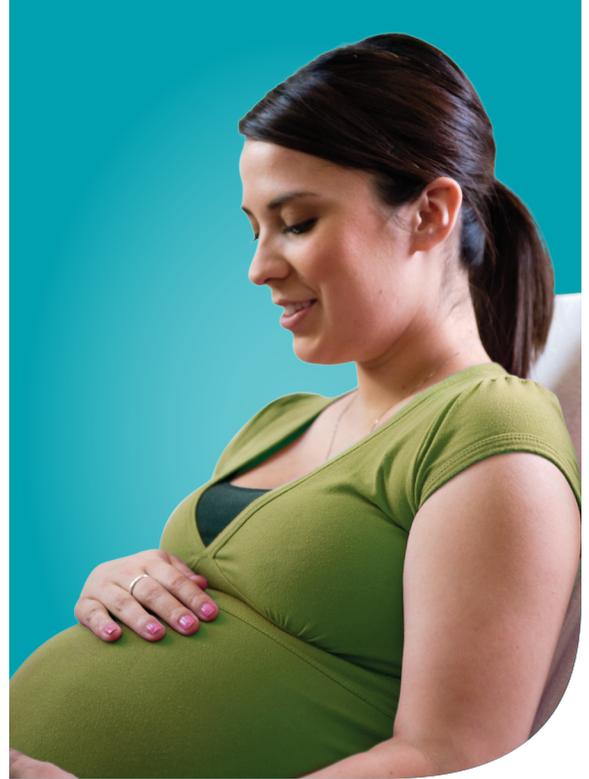
Dental problems may include:

- **Cavities** – small holes in the surface of your teeth caused by germs, food and acid on your teeth.
 - Brushing and flossing help remove the stuff that causes cavities
- **Gingivitis** – redness, swelling, soreness and bleeding of the gums.
- **Loose teeth** – high levels of pregnancy hormones can loosen the tissues and bones that keep teeth in place.
- **Gum disease (Periodontal disease)** –gingivitis that gets worse. Can lead to infection in the gums and problems with the bones that support the teeth. May lead to preterm birth or low birth weight babies if it is not treated.

- **Pregnancy tumors** – lumps that form on the gums, usually between teeth. They look raw and red and bleed easily. They are not cancer. Usually go away after giving birth.
- **Tooth break-down (erosion)** – from too much stomach acid on the teeth. This happens when throwing up in early pregnancy. The acid can harm the hard surface of the teeth.

How to prevent dental problems

- Make sure to get regular dental check-ups before, during and after pregnancy.
- Brush teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and floss once a day.
- If you can't brush teeth due to vomiting, use antacids (like Tums) or rinse your mouth with 1 teaspoon of baking soda in 1 cup of water. This will lower the amount of acid in your mouth.
- Eat healthy foods.
- Limit sugary foods and drinks.
- Don't smoke.
- Don't drink alcohol.



Do you have questions?

Call our 24-hour Nurse Advice Line.
We are here to help you.



English: (888) 275-8750

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