



# Pregnancy and Your Teeth

Member Resources – Oral Health

## What can you expect from your mouth when you're expecting?

Up to three-quarters of all pregnant women have gingivitis. This is a swelling of the gums, which makes them more likely to bleed. Swollen, tender gums can lead to gum disease, infection, and even bone loss.<sup>1</sup> Changing hormones, morning sickness, and unusual eating habits may all contribute.

But that's just how it affects mothers-to-be. Gum disease can affect your baby before and after birth.

### Like Mother, Like Child

Untreated tooth decay in moms makes tooth decay three times as likely in their kids.<sup>2</sup> That's why tooth care—regular and to treat decay—is so important

But the trouble for children starts before they're born. Gum disease affects your whole body. Left untreated, bacteria can move through your system. This can increase your risk of giving birth too early or having a baby with a low birth weight.<sup>2</sup>

## See Your OB—and Your Dentist

Doctors' appointments can be overwhelming during this time. But your dentist can give you care that no other doctor can. Try to schedule a visit about six months after your last checkup. And rest assured that dental x-rays and most topical and dental pain medicine is safe, too.<sup>3</sup>

To keep your mouth in tip-top shape:<sup>2</sup>

- Brush twice daily with fluoride toothpaste.
- Drink tap water with fluoride daily.
- Ask your dentist how to manage or prevent dental problems.

#### Sources:

1 <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/features/pregnancy-and-oral-health.html>, February 2019.

2 [https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/Dental\\_Care\\_During\\_Pregnancy.pdf](https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/Dental_Care_During_Pregnancy.pdf), accessed November 2019.

3 "Questions moms are asking about oral health," American Academy of Pediatrics, 2018, accessed November 2019.

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