

Pregnancy

Pregnancy and your teeth

When you are pregnant, you know it is vital that you take particularly good care of yourself, both for your own health and that of your unborn baby. What you may not know is that it is also important to take care of your teeth and gums during pregnancy.

The links between periodontal health and pregnancy

During pregnancy, your body produces higher levels of hormones, estrogen and progesterone. In a condition called pregnancy gingivitis, elevated hormone levels cause your gums to overreact to plaque, the sticky film of food residue, saliva, and bacteria that is constantly forming on your teeth. This reaction causes swollen, red, and tender gums that may bleed when you brush or floss.

Not all pregnant women will develop pregnancy gingivitis, but it is most likely to appear in the second trimester and peak in the middle of the third trimester. If you already had gingivitis when you became pregnant, it is likely that the condition will worsen as your pregnancy progresses.

Your pregnancy also puts you at risk for developing pregnancy tumors, which are large, non-cancerous growths around or between teeth that develop from swollen, irritated gums.



Healthy gums



Gingivitis can also affect the health of your baby. Excessive plaque bacteria can enter the bloodstream through your gums and trigger the production of prostaglandins, a hormone-like chemical. Your body may interpret this as a signal to go into labor, and your baby could be born too soon and too small.

Gingivitis can also lead to another serious condition. It can make your gums become more vulnerable to developing periodontal disease, an infection of the teeth, gums, and jawbone that, left untreated, can lead to tooth loss.

This not only affects your own oral health, but your baby's health as well. Researchers have discovered that active periodontal disease during pregnancy can raise the risk of preeclampsia, a pregnancy-induced high blood pressure that can harm the health of both the mother and baby.

Prevent gingivitis and periodontal disease

The good news is that you can prevent gingivitis and periodontal disease by flossing daily and brushing your teeth after each meal with a soft-bristled toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste.

If toothpaste makes you feel nauseated, you can brush with plain water and rinse with an anti-plaque or fluoridated mouthwash.

We keep a close eye on your oral health throughout your pregnancy, cleaning your teeth as needed, monitoring the effectiveness of your home hygiene routine, and answering any questions about oral health during your pregnancy.