

Pregnancy



So you're expecting a baby? Congratulations!

In the midst of all the things you need to think about, worrying about seeing your dentist may not be very high on the list. But your dental health has a big impact on your overall health which in turn has a major influence on the health of your baby, so it's important that you maintain a good dental health routine throughout your pregnancy, and beyond.

You should also disregard old wives tales about calcium leaching from your teeth to the baby, the loss of a tooth for every baby you have, and fluorides treatments being bad for your baby. None of these are true and your dentist should be an active part of your healthcare team in the lead-up, during and after your pregnancy.

Make seeing your dentist a priority

Hormonal fluctuations during pregnancy can exacerbate problems with your teeth and gums, and so you should maintain regular check-ups and cleanings. Your dentist is well-versed in which medications you can safely take while pregnant, and which procedures can be safely done at different stages of pregnancy.

Dealing with food cravings and morning sickness

Unusual food cravings are a fact of life for many women during pregnancy. For instance, you might routinely wake up at midnight desperate for chocolate-covered pickles in ice cream, with a side order of chips and jalapeno peppers. If your cravings take a turn towards the sweet end of things, try to limit the sugary snacks and instead, choose healthier options such as fresh fruit with natural or Greek yogurt.

If you suffer from morning sickness, you need to know that vomit is highly acidic and can cause irreversible damage to your teeth. Tempting though it is to brush your teeth straight after a bout of morning sickness, it's best to wait an hour or so as brushing too soon can strip away the enamel, which is the softened protective coating of your teeth, leaving them more vulnerable to decay and sensitivity. While you're waiting, try rinsing your mouth with water to remove the acids, chew sugar-free gum or try eating an acid-neutralising food such as milk or hard cheese.

Brushing and flossing

Maintaining your usual oral health routine is even more important when you're pregnant since hormonal changes mean that you have an increased susceptibility to gum inflammations and infections. Some women develop "pregnancy gingivitis", where gums swell and become more sensitive and bleed during **brushing** and **flossing**. Should this happen to you, your dentist is able to keep a close eye on your gums and help you manage the condition. Generally this condition will resolve itself after you have your baby.



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