



# Pregnancy and your oral health

**Pregnancy is an important time in your life, and a time to take extra care of your teeth and gums.**

## How can I look after my teeth and gums?

- Brush your teeth and gums with a soft-bristle toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste twice a day. Remember to 'spit don't rinse' after brushing. The fluoride in toothpaste strengthens and protects your teeth.
- Clean between your teeth daily with dental floss or an interdental brush.
- Limit sugary snacks and drinks, especially between meals. Some drinks do not contain sugar but are acidic and can cause tooth erosion e.g. diet soft drinks.
- Drink tap water when thirsty and try eating fresh fruit instead of drinking fruit juice.
- Make an appointment with your dental practitioner for a check-up and advice.
- Avoid smoking and drinking alcohol as they are harmful to your baby and to your teeth and gums.



## Is it safe to have dental treatment during pregnancy?

- Most dental procedures can be carried out safely during pregnancy.
- Be sure to tell your dental practitioner you are pregnant or think you may be.
- X-rays or radiographs may be recommended. Speak to your dental practitioner if you have any concerns.

**Continued on next page**

---

## Will morning sickness affect my teeth?

- Morning sickness may cause gastric reflux and/or vomiting which contains stomach acids that can affect tooth enamel and increase the risk of tooth decay.
- If you experience reflux/vomiting DO NOT brush your teeth straight away. Instead rinse your mouth with water.
- Smear a little fluoride toothpaste over your teeth with your finger and wait for 30 minutes for the tooth surface to recover.
- Chew sugar-free gum to increase saliva flow to help dilute the acids and protect your teeth.

## Will my teeth decay more easily now I am pregnant?

- Sugary foods such as biscuits and cakes, fruit drinks and soft drinks can increase your risk of tooth decay.
- Over time, your teeth can decay from frequent acid attacks. Plaque (bacteria) forms constantly on your teeth feeding on the sugars in your diet. The plaque turns sugars into plaque acids which attack tooth enamel.

## Why are my gums bleeding?

- It is common during pregnancy to experience swollen and bleeding gums, referred to as 'pregnancy gingivitis'. Hormonal changes during pregnancy makes your gums more sensitive to plaque toxins.
- Gingivitis can be prevented or reversed by keeping your teeth and gums clean. Having a dental check-up early in your pregnancy can help.

## Does my baby's teeth development affect my own teeth?

- It is a myth that calcium is lost from the mother's teeth during pregnancy. The calcium your baby needs is provided by your diet, not by your teeth.
- So be sure to get enough calcium in your diet.


**A clean, healthy mouth and a nutritious diet are essential  
for good oral health for you and your baby.**


**For further information please discuss with your dental practitioner**


---

### Would you like more information or to provide feedback?

This document can be made available in alternative formats such as braille, audio tape or electronically on request.

 Communications Officer, Dental Health Services  
Locked Bag 15, Bentley Delivery Centre, WA 6983

 (08) 9313 0555

 [publications@dental.health.wa.gov.au](mailto:publications@dental.health.wa.gov.au)

 [www.dental.wa.gov.au](http://www.dental.wa.gov.au)

Any images used in this document are for illustrative purposes only, as they are only offered as a general guide.



© 2020 Dental Health Services WA. All rights reserved.