**Pregnancy and Dental Health**

Keeping your teeth and gums healthy during pregnancy has many benefits for you and your baby.

**Did you know…**
- Morning sickness can leave stomach acids in your mouth that can damage the surfaces of your teeth and promote tooth decay.
- Changes in hormone levels during pregnancy can cause swollen gums that bleed during brushing and flossing, often known as "pregnancy gingivitis".
- If you have gum disease or an infection you may be at risk of having a premature or low birth-weight baby.

**What can you do to help?**
- Brush your teeth and your gums with a soft toothbrush twice a day, using a pea size amount of fluoride toothpaste. Also, gently brush your tongue.
- Gently floss daily to remove plaque from between your teeth and gums. If your gums bleed, keep on flossing.
- Eat healthy nutritious food and avoid sweets.
- If you gag, use a small, child-size toothbrush and lean your head down and over the sink while brushing. It helps relax the throat and allows the saliva to flow out.

**Morning sickness**
- Nausea and vomiting can happen during pregnancy. Causes of morning sickness include changes in hormone levels, tension, worry or fatigue.
- Try eating unsalted crackers or dry toast before getting out of bed in the morning.
- Rinse your mouth with tap water, or a fluoride mouth rinse after vomiting, which will protect your teeth from the damaging stomach acids.
- If vomiting persists, notify your doctor.

**Visiting the dentist and the hygienist**
- Regular dental cleanings and check-ups are important before, during, and after pregnancy.
- Be sure to tell them that you are pregnant.
- You may want to postpone routine dental radiograph until after your baby is born.
- Should your dentist recommend an emergency radiograph, the dental office will provide a leaded apron to shield you and your baby from this low dose.

---

**Need more information?**
Talk to your dentist or dental hygienist or call Ottawa Public Health at 613-580-6744.

---

07/2019