



Pregnancy and Oral 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”
- Pregnant mothers with poor oral health have a risk of developing periodontitis (infection of bone holding the teeth in place). This type of infection has been associated with poor pregnancy outcomes such as:
 - delivering a pre-term baby
 - delivering a baby with a low birth

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

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

Need more information?

Talk to your dentist or dental hygienist or call Ottawa Public Health at 613-580-6744.