

Oral Health Care Tips for Prenatal Providers

Quality Toolkit

Oral Healthcare During Pregnancy

Advise expectant mothers that oral health is important for them, as well as, their baby during pregnancy and after giving birth.

- It is very important to refer expectant mothers to a dental provider early. Have a list of area dentists available for referral.

Inform expectant mothers that:

- Caries are contagious. Moms with cavities in particular, can transmit cavity-causing oral bacteria to their babies. Refer expectant moms to a dentist early in their pregnancy to reduce transmission of caries to the baby
- Hormonal changes during pregnancy can increase chances of developing gum disease and cavities. Gums will also be tender and can bleed easily.
- Routine oral health care decreases the risk of pre-eclampsia, premature delivery, and low birth weight in babies, and can improve overall oral and physical health for expectant mothers.
- Dental x-rays, check-ups, and cleanings are safe during pregnancy.

Encourage pregnant moms to eat healthy foods and limit sugary foods and drinks. Eating healthy will help their overall health, as well as the health of their baby. It also decreases the risk of developing cavities.



- Stomach acids from vomiting can damage tooth enamel and increase risk of tooth decay. Take the following steps when coping with vomiting while pregnant:
 - Rinse your mouth thoroughly with plain tap water.
 - Follow up with a fluoridated mouthwash or
 - Use a dab of fluoridated toothpaste on your finger and smear it over your teeth.
 - Rinse thoroughly with water.
 - Brush teeth last to be sure stomach acids are rinsed from teeth first (stomach acids can scratch enamel when brushing).
- Dental services are a covered benefit under Medicaid, including but not limited to:
 - Cleanings and preventive services
 - X-rays and dental exams
 - Fillings
 - Gum-related treatments
 - Some oral surgeries
- For more information, refer expectant mothers to **DMAS**, to learn more about their dental benefits through Medicaid.

