

A pregnant woman with curly hair, wearing a light pink t-shirt, is brushing her teeth with a blue and white toothbrush. She is holding her left hand over her pregnant belly, which has a diamond ring on her ring finger. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

Poor oral health can affect a healthy pregnancy

Like other health issues, your oral health can have a negative impact on your pregnancy. Taking good care of your mouth, teeth, and gums during pregnancy can help you have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

Being pregnant can increase your risk for oral health problems, and these problems can affect your pregnancy. For example, some studies show a link between gum disease and preterm birth. Preterm birth is birth that happens too early, before 37 weeks of pregnancy. Preterm babies may have more health problems at birth and later in life than babies born full term.

If you have any signs or symptoms of dental problems, call your dentist or ask your prenatal provider to refer you for dental care. Signs of a condition are things someone else can see or know about you, like you have a rash or you're coughing. Symptoms are things you feel yourself that others can't see, like having a sore throat or feeling dizzy.

Signs and symptoms of dental problems include:

- Bad breath
- Loose teeth
- Mouth sores or lumps on the gums
- New spaces between your teeth
- Receding gums (when your gums pull away from your teeth so you can see roots of your teeth)
- Pus along your gumline (where your gums meet your teeth)
- Gums that are red, swollen, tender, or shiny; gums that bleed easily
- Toothache or other pain

If you have pain or swelling, call your dentist right away. If you have an infection, you need quick treatment to help prevent problems for your baby.

Dental health is an important part of your overall health. It's also an important part of your pregnancy (prenatal) care, and there are simple preventive measures you can take to help ensure a healthy pregnancy and baby.

- Brush your teeth twice a day and floss once a day
- Go to your regular dental checkups during pregnancy. Although dental X-rays are safe during pregnancy, be sure to tell your dentist that you are pregnant
- You can be referred for a routine dental checkup at your first prenatal visit
- If you are worried about your dental health, see your dentist right away



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