

Pregnancy and Your Oral Health



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH AND
EMERGENCY SERVICES

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

Your changing body

Your body undergoes many changes during pregnancy. These changes can affect the health of your teeth and gums.

- **Changes in hormone levels** can cause gums to look redder and bleed during brushing and flossing. Some women can have severe swelling and bleeding. This is called pregnancy gingivitis and can start as early as the second month peaking around the eighth month
- **Dry Mouth**
You can combat dry mouth by drinking plenty of water. Avoid juices and pop as they contain too much sugar
- **Morning Sickness**
Vomiting can leave stomach acids in your mouth that can damage or erode the enamel of the teeth and promote tooth decay

Healthy gums and teeth may help reduce the risk of a premature or low birth weight baby.



Helping yourself

Caring for your mouth and teeth is always a good idea. While pregnant, there are specific things you can do to help

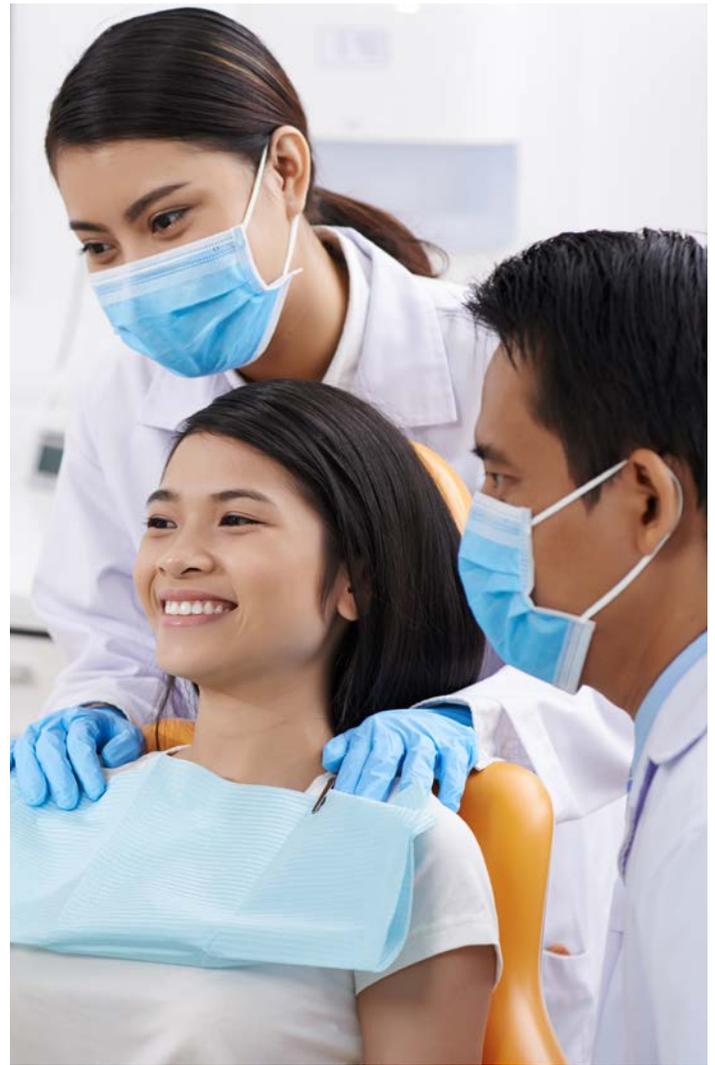
- Brush twice a day using a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste
- Floss daily to remove plaque from your teeth and gums. Floss sticks are fine to use if you cannot floss with your fingers
- Eat nutritious food and avoid snacking on foods that contain sugar
- Drink lots of water, avoid large amount of juice, pop and energy drinks, which contain too much sugar
- To help prevent morning sickness, try eating dry toast or unsalted crackers before getting out of bed in the morning
- If you vomit, avoid brushing your teeth for one hour as it can damage your teeth. It is better to clear the stomach acid by rinsing with water, a fluoride mouth rinse, or 1 tsp of baking soda mixed with 1 cup of warm water



It is safe and wise to visit the dentist while pregnant

- The second trimester is the best time to receive routine dental care
- Avoid routine x-rays until after your pregnancy
- Tell your dentist or hygienist that you are pregnant
- Regular cleaning and check-ups before, during and after your pregnancy are important
- Get all tooth decay treated before your baby is born. This will decrease the chance of decay-causing germs being passed to your baby. Babies with cavity-free moms are at lower risk for developing cavities
- If emergency dental treatment is required, your dentist should consult with your obstetrician or midwife. Treatment may be necessary to ease or prevent pain and infection for you and your baby

If you have any questions about your oral health during pregnancy ask your dentist, or call 519-519-4400 to speak with one of our Public Health Dental Hygienists.



Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.

1385383 (10/16)

Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services

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