

## Oral Health During Pregnancy

Poor oral health may have effects on general health, and may affect different aspects of pregnancy. Women with poor oral hygiene have increased risk of gingivitis. Also increased pathogenic bacterial counts, may affect the pregnancy outcome in a variety of ways. The Ob/Gyn has the unique opportunity to remind their patients to see the dentist prior to a pregnancy and during a pregnancy.

The dentist should be aware of ALL medications and vitamins the patient is taking, as they can affect how certain conditions are treated. It is helpful if you provide your patient a letter to give to the dentist that includes their medications and lets the dentist know that it is ok to treat your patient.

Here are some oral health care tips to relay to your pregnant patients:

- Hormonal changes to the body during pregnancy can cause the gums to be sore and swollen and possibly bleed. This is called “pregnancy gingivitis” and should be treated by a dentist as soon as possible.
- Most oral care is safe during pregnancy. It is important to visit the dentist every six months or whenever there is a concern.
- Brush at least twice a day, floss, and use a new toothbrush every three to four months.
- Rinse every night with a mouthwash that contains fluoride.
- Eat a variety of healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, dairy products and whole grains.
- If the patient vomits, it is important to rinse the mouth to stop the acid from attacking her teeth.
- Smoking and drinking alcohol during pregnancy should be avoided.

Dental caries, which leads to tooth decay, occurs very quickly. The baby should have regular checkups starting at age one. Your patient should have a Dental Home, the dentist’s office where she goes regularly every six months. Choosing the right dentist is very important.

### New Pregnancy Benefit

Effective March 1, 2015, pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid and FAMIS MOMS who are 21 years of age and older are eligible to receive appropriate benefits covered by the **Smiles For Children** program. Dental benefits for pregnant women who are 21 years of age and older will be discontinued at the end of the month following their 60<sup>th</sup> day postpartum.

Pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid, FAMIS and FAMIS MOMS who are under age 21 currently are eligible to receive comprehensive children’s benefits covered through Virginia’s **Smiles For Children** dental program which include orthodontia.

If your patient is covered by **Smiles For Children** (Virginia Medicaid, FAMIS or FAMIS Plus), we can help her choose a dentist she likes and trusts. She can call 888-912-3456 to find out the names of dentists near her home and to learn more about her dental benefits. For more information, she may also visit [www.DentaQuest.com](http://www.DentaQuest.com) or download the MyDentaQuest app on her smart phone.

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