

# A healthy mouth may reduce chances of pre-term delivery.

While studies have not proven a link between gum disease and pre-term deliveries, the American Academy of Periodontology and American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry are working to increase awareness of the importance of oral health care in expectant mothers.

Several studies indicate women free of gum disease, or women who have their gum disease treated are at a much lower risk of delivering premature babies with low birth weights<sup>4</sup>.

The AAP recommends women brush and floss daily and see their dentist regularly during pregnancy to enhance the chances of a healthy delivery.

1. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, [http://www.aapd.org/providers/pressreleases.asp?NEWS\\_ID=60](http://www.aapd.org/providers/pressreleases.asp?NEWS_ID=60)
2. American Academy of Periodontology, <http://www.perio.org/consumer/women.htm>
3. American Academy of Family Physicians, <http://www.aafp.org/afp/2008/0415/p1139.html>
4. American Academy of Periodontology, <http://www.perio.org/consumer/prematurity-studies.htm>

There are many places to find more information about oral health during your pregnancy.

American Dental Association

[www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)

American Academy of Family Physicians

[www.aafp.org](http://www.aafp.org)

U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

[www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov)

Always consult your personal doctor and dentist about health questions.



## Nebraska Office of Oral Health

Nebraska State Office Building

P.O. Box 95026

Lincoln, NE 68509

Phone: (402) 471-0166

[dhhs.oralhealth@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.oralhealth@nebraska.gov)

Watch Your Mouth!

# Oral Health and Pregnancy

A Healthy Smile For a New Life



Healthy Smiles for a Healthy Future

**“Pregnancy is very special time. You’ll want to think about taking good care of yourself and getting your baby’s life off to a healthy start.**

Your oral health is an important part of your overall health, and good oral health habits not only help prevent oral problems during pregnancy, they also affect the health of your unborn child.”

-American Dental Association web site  
[www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)

## **There is a connection between your diet during pregnancy, your oral health, and the oral health of your baby.**

What you eat during pregnancy affects both your health and the development of your child – including their teeth. Your baby’s teeth will begin to form between the third and sixth month of your pregnancy<sup>1</sup>.

To give your baby a healthy start, it is important to eat plenty of nutrients – especially calcium, phosphorus, protein, and Vitamins A,C, and D. These can be found in foods like fruits, leafy vegetables, nuts, and cheeses.

## **Take time to brush between extra meals.**

Many pregnant women have the normal desire to eat between meals.

Eating extra food while pregnant is fine. But, be sure to eat healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, dairy, whole grains, and lean proteins. Eating extra food rich in fats and sugar can lead to tooth decay.

## **Pregnancy may affect your gums.**

During pregnancy, your body’s hormone levels rise considerably. This can make certain conditions, such as gum disease, more likely<sup>2</sup>.

Gum disease is especially common during the second to eighth months of pregnancy. This disease may cause red, puffy or tender gums that tend to bleed when you brush.

Your dentist may recommend more frequent cleanings during your second trimester or early third trimester to help you avoid problems with your gums.



## **Make a dental visit a priority.**

During pregnancy, you will make many trips to your doctor.

But, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians, only 22 to 34 percent of women see a dentist during pregnancy<sup>3</sup>.

Be sure you keep your regular dental visit to help avoid any problems with your teeth.

Remember, with a new baby, it may be quite awhile before you have time to see the dentist. Your health is important too!

