



## Is Your Mouth Ready for Pregnancy?

**C**ongratulations on your pregnancy! Now... when was the last time you were at the dentist? Although it is a myth that a mother “loses a tooth with every baby”, taking a little extra care of your mouth now can be an important part of a healthy pregnancy and better overall health for you and your new baby.

### Managing Morning Sickness

Stomach acid from vomiting and acid reflux can harm your teeth. Here are some ideas you can try to help minimize the damage.

- Immediately after vomiting
  - Do not brush your teeth, as it might damage softened tooth enamel
  - Rinse your mouth with a solution of tap water and baking soda to neutralize stomach acid. You can follow up with a mouth rinse containing fluoride, if desired.
- Wait one hour before brushing
  - Use very soft toothbrush and toothpaste with fluoride
  - Spit out extra toothpaste, but do not rinse – let the fluoride work to harden teeth
- Ideas to help reduce nausea
  - Nibble on a few crackers, rinsing teeth with water afterwards
  - Try peppermint tea or sugar free gum

More ideas on managing morning sickness can be found at Oral Health Kansas website- <http://bit.ly/teethandnausea>

## Daily Mouth Care

Keeping your teeth and gums clean are essential for a healthy mouth, body, and pregnancy.

- Brush your teeth twice a day using a soft bristle toothbrush and toothpaste with fluoride
- Brushing before bed is the most important time. Avoid snacking after brushing. The toothbrush should be the last thing that touches your teeth before bed.
- Using dental floss each day will remove food and germs that the toothbrush cannot reach.

## Eating Habits

**When** you eat is just as important as **what** you eat when it comes to your risk of tooth decay. Most cavities are caused by what we eat and drink between meals.

- Between meals, choose snacks that do not contain simple carbohydrates. Some examples include cheese, hard boiled eggs, unsweetened popcorn, fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Drink water instead of sweetened beverages. To add more interest, try adding fresh fruit, vegetables or herbs to your glass.

## See dentist for needed treatment

Untreated infections from poor oral health can spread to other parts of your body. It is important and safe to have dental care while you are pregnant. Do not wait until after your baby is born to have tooth decay and gum disease treated.

- If your last visit was more than 6 months ago, make a dental appointment as soon as possible.
- Dental services, including cleaning, x-rays, some pain medications, numbing shots, and fillings are all safe to have during pregnancy.
- If you do not currently have a dentist, or cost is an issue, consider checking out your closest safety net dental clinic. Safety net clinics provide care to all ages, regardless of whether the family has dental insurance or not. They accept payment from Medicaid (KanCare), private insurance, and out of pocket payments. Use this map to see if you have a safety net dental clinic in your area: <http://bit.ly/KSdentalclinics>

More information on dental care during pregnancy can be found at the Oral Health Kansas website- <http://bit.ly/pgdentalcare>



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