

HEALTH & BEAUTY

Your Mouth and Your Health

Oral Health During Pregnancy

By Luiz dos Santos, DMD
Special to The Answer

With the rise of hormone levels during pregnancy, it is not uncommon for you to experience gingival (gums) inflammation and bleeding. Therefore, it is very important for you to take good care of your oral health while you are pregnant. Preventive dental exam and cleanings during pregnancy are not only safe, but also recommended to avoid oral infections.

If you are planning to get pregnant, try to make a dental appointment before you get pregnant, so that way you can have your dental x-rays, exam, cleaning, and any oral health problem treated in advance of your pregnancy.

Now, if you are already pregnant, do not miss your dental appointment, or if you do not have a dental routine visit coming up soon, call your dentist to schedule one. During pregnancy it is very important for you to pay close attention to any changes in your mouth and teeth. If you notice bleeding or swelling gingiva (gums), or if you are experiencing dental sensitivity or pain, talk with your dentist as soon as possible.

Here are some questions you might be asking yourself:

Is there a best time during my pregnancy that I can see my dentist?



Luiz dos Santos, DMD

Yes, during the second, and early on in your third trimester is usually the best time to see your dentist.

During the first trimester is the time were fetal organs are developing, so it is best to avoid any potential risks during this period if possible.

Once you reach your third trimester it may becomes more difficult for you to lie on a dental chair for a long period of time.

But if I experience dental pain during my first, or later on my third trimester should I postpone my dental visit until my second trimester or after the birth?

No, you should talk with your dentist as soon as possible. He or she will be able to help you especially during emergencies.

Would I be able to have x-rays taken during my pregnancy?

Yes, all routine dental x-rays will be postpone until after your baby is born, and only necessary x-rays would be taken to address you dental needs. Your dentist will be using all the measures necessary to protect you, and your baby during x-ray exposure.

Would I be able to have my regular/elective dental work done during my pregnancy?

It will depend. If you are not in pain, your dentist will be able to determine if a dental work such as cavity fillings, crowns, or elective – teeth whitening, or other cosmetic procedures could be postpone until later depending on

where you are in your pregnancy. The best course of action is postpone all non-emergency dental work until after the baby is born, and only focus on dental cleaning to maintain health gingiva (gums), and/or dental emergencies to take you out of pain and make you feel comfortable.

Below are some suggestions for maintaining good oral health before, during, and after your pregnancy.

- 1-Eat nutritious, and well balanced meals
- 2-Follow good oral hygiene to prevent oral problems:
 - a.Brush your teeth twice daily, followed by oral rinse
 - b.Floss at least once a day

c.Visit your dentist regularly
3-Have preventive exams and cleanings during your pregnancy

4-Let your dentist know you are planning to become pregnant or if you know you are pregnant

5-Keep your dentist informed of any changes in your mouth – gingiva (gums), and teeth

6-Postpone non-emergency dental work until the second trimester or after birth if possible

Happy Mother's Day!

Until next time: Oral Health from Infancy to Adolescence. Dr. Dos Santos is a graduate from UNLV – School of Dental Medicine. He is a practicing dentist in Las Vegas and can be reached at (702) 870-6161.

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