

PREGNANCY AND DENTAL HEALTH

Congratulations on your pregnancy! As your body changes to accommodate your baby, you may also notice the following oral conditions.

Bleeding gums (pregnancy gingivitis)

Pregnancy hormones will increase your sensitivity to the presence of plaque (bacterial) deposits in and around the gumline. The irritation makes your gums more fragile and prone to bleeding during brushing and flossing. Maintaining good oral hygiene (brushing twice a day and flossing daily) will help to keep plaque to a minimum. Alcohol-free mouthrinses are optional.

Mothers with untreated gum disease are at a greater risk for preterm births and complications.

Gum swelling



Some women may develop a larger localized gum swelling that bleeds easily when it is traumatized. This is known as a **pregnancy granuloma**. It develops in the setting of poor oral hygiene and pregnancy gingivitis. Again, pregnancy hormones exaggerate your body's inflammatory response to plaque or foreign material (food debris). Most granulomas resolve spontaneously after pregnancy and breastfeeding. Very stubborn ones may need to be removed.

Increased teeth sensitivity



Severe morning sickness and vomiting may cause acid erosion of your teeth. You may experience increased sensitivity to cold foods and drinks. Frequent intake of acidic beverages (apple cider vinegar, citrus fruit juices) will also make the sensitivity worse.

Using a desensitizing toothpaste twice daily and brushing with a dry toothbrush without rinsing your mouth out afterwards is recommended.

Increased risk of tooth decay

Frequent snacking or cravings for sugary or starchy foods can increase your risk for developing cavities. Choose unsweetened beverages and tooth-friendly snacks such as cheese, nuts or unsweetened yoghurt instead. Beware of hidden sugars in dried fruit, fruit juice, cereal and yoghurt.

You should continue with regular professional dental maintenance during your pregnancy. 3 monthly visits (once every trimester) will help to keep your mouth in top condition. We may also prescribe you with BioGaia Oral probiotics for your mouth to help maintain the % of good bacteria in your mouth during your pregnancy.

Lying flat in the 3rd trimester can be challenging, so please let our dentist know how to position the dental chair for your comfort.

If you do require dental treatment during your pregnancy, dental local anaesthetics with adrenaline are considered safe. Painkillers (paracetamol, codeine, aspirin or NSAIDs such as ponstan, ibuprofen, naproxen) and antibiotics (penicillin, metronidazole) are safe to use during pregnancy for acute dental pain. X-rays taken with a lead apron pose no harm to your baby but are best avoided during the 1st trimester.

Additionally, If any extensive or emergency dental treatment is needed during the period of your pregnancy, we will get written clearance from your Gynaecologist prior to commencement of any procedure.

If you are considering having another baby in the future, having a pre-natal dental screening can help to ensure that any invasive dental work that you need can be completed in time.