



Pregnancy and Dental Care: The importance of cleanings and oral hygiene while pregnant.



Did you know that pregnant women run the risk of having periodontal disease?

Periodontal (gum) disease can contribute to many health complications. Heart disease, increased possibility of strokes, and serious threats for people with diabetes, are some of the dangers associated with gum disease. It can cause many issues for pregnant women including:

1. Risk of having a pre-term and low birth weight baby.
2. Future health problems and disabilities for unborn babies.
3. Cerebral palsy and mental retardation are some of the potential health problems.
4. It is common for expecting mothers to have gum infection. Nearly 50 percent of pregnant women experience some form of gingivitis. Pregnancy gingivitis can occur for various reasons including a rise in hormones during pregnancy, buildup of plaque, and a woman's genetics. Gingivitis can either go unnoticed or it can be very painful.

The best way to avoid these complications is for women to go **visit their dentist at the beginning of their pregnancy**. Another way to stay healthy is by practicing good oral hygiene. Gum disease is easy to address if caught in time.

Keep periodontal disease under control and maintain good oral hygiene while pregnant by following these tips:

1. Brush your teeth at least twice a day with toothbrush and toothpaste
2. Replace your toothbrush every three months
3. Floss daily
4. Get a dental check-up and teeth cleaning at least twice a year
5. Avoid smoking and other forms of tobacco
6. Avoid candy and other sugary foods
7. Eat a well-balanced diet
8. Contact your dentist if you notice:
 - Red, tender, swollen gums
 - Gums that bleed when you brush them
 - Gums pulling away from your teeth
 - Loose teeth