

# Pregnancy and Oral Health

## Misconception about pregnancy

- **Myth:** the fetus is responsible for their mother's teeth loss due to fetal absorption of calcium.
- **Fact:** the fetus gets his calcium intake from the mother's diet only and the loss of teeth could happen due to neglect in oral hygiene practice.
- **Myth:** exposure to x-rays during pregnancy poses a risk to fetal health.
- **Fact:** radiation from a dental x-ray is very low and no radiation reaches the baby so there is no risk of taking an x-ray during any stage of pregnancy. Your dentist might use a lead protector to protect the fetus.
- **Myth:** all medications used during pregnancy are harmful to the fetus, especially antibiotics.
- **Fact:** there are some medications that have minimal or no effect on the fetus and they can be used during this period. Always consult with your doctor prior to taking any medications or supplements.



Hamad Dental Centre

Patient and Family Education

@ patienteducation@hamad.qa

© 2019 Hamad Medical Corporation

19-0041

# Pregnancy and Oral Health

## Pregnancy and Oral Health

Pregnancy is a special period in a woman's life where you go through many changes in hormonal levels. Those changes may affect your overall health as well as your baby's health. That is why it is very important to take a good care of your mouth throughout the pregnancy journey.



## How can pregnancy affect your mouth?

- **Gum:** red, swollen gums that bleed after brushing. This is very common during pregnancy, especially if you are not maintaining good oral hygiene. Your dentist might advise you to brush regularly for 2-3 minutes twice a day using a soft bristle toothbrush and fluoridated toothpaste. Use dental floss as part of your regular hygiene practice. In certain instances, antimicrobial mouth rinse might be beneficial.

- **Pregnancy swellings:** Benign lesions appear on the gums between teeth and are believed to be related to plaque. They usually disappear after the baby is born. But they might require removal if accompanied by persisting pain or discomfort. Your dentist may advise you to brush your teeth at least twice a day and floss once daily to prevent developing pregnancy swelling.
- **Teeth erosion:** It is not uncommon to have frequent vomiting with nausea especially during the first few months of pregnancy. Vomiting is acidic in nature, which could cause erosion, sensitivity and decay of the front and back teeth. Your dentist might recommend rinsing with warm water or baking soda in water to balance the effect of acid on your teeth.
- **Dryness of the mouth:** Many women experience dry mouth during pregnancy. You can resolve this problem by drinking lots of water or using sugar-free (xylitol based) chewing gum to increase the secretion of saliva.
- **Tooth decay:** Your dentist might advise you to limit foods containing sugar to mealtimes only and to drink water or low-fat milk and avoid carbonated and sugary drinks.
- **Saliva changes:** Increased saliva may be associated with nausea. Your dentist might advise you to use a small-headed brush to reduce nausea when brushing.

## What should you know before you see your dentist?

- Dental care is safe and important for you and your baby's health during pregnancy.
- Make sure your dentist knows that you are pregnant and inform them about any changes you have noticed since you became pregnant.
- Be sure to let your dentist know about any medications or supplements you are taking.
- It is safe to get an x-ray at any stage during your pregnancy.
- You can continue to have preventive exams and cleaning during your pregnancy.
- Dental work, including local anesthetics, can be done safely at any point during the pregnancy.

