



Questions moms are asking about oral health

Learn more at

[HealthyChildren.org/tinyteeth](https://www.healthychildren.org/tinyteeth)



We've included the
top questions

(and related answers)

we hear from moms-to-be and
new moms about oral health.

American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances. This publication has been developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The authors and contributors are expert authorities in the field of pediatrics. No commercial involvement of any kind has been solicited or accepted in the development of the content of this publication. Copyright © 2018 American Academy of Pediatrics. You may download or print from our website for personal reference only. To reproduce in any form for commercial purposes, please contact the American Academy of Pediatrics. The persons whose photographs are depicted on this document are professional models. They have no relation to the issues discussed. Any characters they are portraying are fictional.

This brochure is supported by the Grant or Cooperative Agreement Number, [6 NU38OT000167-04-01], funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC or the Department of Health and Human Services.

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Dental Association, support the value of this clinical document as an educational tool, January 2019.



6 Questions Most Women Have About Oral Health and Pregnancy

Q: Is it safe to have a dental visit while pregnant?

A: Yes! In fact, it's recommended. Morning sickness and hormonal changes can make you more prone to gum disease and cavities

when you're pregnant, which can impact your baby's health. A dentist can treat these problems or help you avoid them.

Q: At what point in my pregnancy should I have a dental check-up?

A: Get a dental check-up before your delivery. If your last visit was more than six months ago, or you have any oral health issues, schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

Q: What information should I tell my dentist about my pregnancy?

A: Tell your dentist that you are pregnant and your due date. Also be sure they are aware of any medications you're taking, specific medical conditions, any form of tobacco or drug use, or if your pregnancy is high-risk.

Q: What about dental treatments – are they safe while pregnant?

A: Yes. X-rays, local anesthetics and most pain medication are safe as long as the dentist is aware of your pregnancy.

Q: What steps should I take to prevent oral health problems during pregnancy?

A: Be sure to brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, clean between your teeth, get a dental check-up, and limit sugary foods. If morning sickness occurs, rinse your mouth with one tsp of baking soda in a glass of water.

Q: Why is my oral health important to my baby after she is born?

A: Moms and babies share everything — including bacteria. If you have cavities, you also have the bacteria that cause them in your mouth. This bacteria can be passed from your mouth to your baby's mouth and increase her risk of cavities, too — so it's important to get a dental check-up and establish a healthy smile before the baby is born.



6 Questions Moms Have About Caring for An Infant's Mouth

Q: What can I do to take care of my baby's mouth before her teeth break through?

A: Whether you breast or bottle feed, wipe your baby's gums after each feeding and before bedtime. Keep taking care of your own oral health and avoid cleaning pacifiers with your mouth.

Q: What should I do when my baby begins teething?

A: Try to soothe your teething baby by rubbing the gums with a clean finger or allowing her to chew on a clean, moist washcloth. You can also ask your doctor to recommend a safe teething ring. Teething doesn't usually cause a fever, rash or diarrhea. If your baby has these symptoms call your pediatrician.

Q: What do I do if my baby falls asleep with a bottle while feeding?

A: Infants may fall asleep with a bottle in their mouth while they are being fed. If this happens, try to wipe their gums with a soft, clean cloth. This helps wipe away sugar and bacteria that together can cause cavities. Avoid putting her down with a bottle.

Q: When should I begin brushing her tiny teeth?

A: Begin brushing as soon as the first tooth appears. Be sure to brush twice a day using a small smear of toothpaste (the size of a grain of rice).

Q: When should I schedule my baby's first dental visit?

A: Your baby should see a dentist after their first tooth appears, but no later than their first birthday. If you need help finding a pediatric dentist or a dentist trained to treat children, ask your pediatrician for recommendations or visit insurekidsnow.gov.

Q: Are baby teeth important?

A: Yes, it is important to keep baby teeth cavity free even though they will eventually fall out. Baby teeth help children to eat healthy food, develop their speech, and maintain space for their adult teeth. Bacteria that cause cavities in baby teeth stay in the mouth and may cause cavities in permanent teeth.