

ORAL HEALTH & PREGNANCY

Ensuring optimal oral health during pregnancy is important for both the expecting mother and the developing child.



Steps you can take during pregnancy

Kentucky Oral Health Coalition
KOHC
For a lifetime of oral health

1. **Make informed dietary choices** that contribute to good oral health, which includes a balanced diet of healthy foods and being mindful of sugary snacks and drinks.
2. **Regular dental visits are safe and highly recommended during pregnancy.** Inform your dentist about your pregnancy and ensure routine check-ups, cleanings, and necessary treatments are part of your prenatal care.
3. **Maintain a consistent oral hygiene routine,** including brushing and flossing. Use fluoride toothpaste and a soft-bristled toothbrush to keep your gums and teeth healthy.
4. **If you have morning sickness, simply rinse your mouth with water** – avoid brushing directly after any stomach acid has been in the mouth.

Oral health considerations during pregnancy



- Hormonal changes during pregnancy can increase the risk of cavities, gingivitis, and gum disease.
- Morning sickness and changes in dietary habits may contribute to enamel erosion and tooth decay.
- Cavities are common, but untreated cavities or tooth loss during pregnancy put children at three times the risk of having cavities themselves.
- Poor oral health during pregnancy has been linked to preterm birth, low birth weight, and gestational diabetes.
- Babies' teeth start forming under the gums as early as six weeks gestation. Balanced nutrition and vitamin intake are essential for jaw, palate, and tooth development throughout pregnancy.
- Certain medications can impact the growth, development, and health of the baby's mouth. Always share that you are pregnant with your healthcare providers and pharmacists before taking any medication.





Considerations once baby is born

- Hormonal changes, stress, and adapting to new routines can impact oral health for new moms. Be sure to drink plenty of water, continue with at-home dental hygiene, and see a dentist regularly.
- Cavity-causing bacteria can be spread from mom to baby through saliva. Avoid sharing food, drink, utensils, using your own teeth to make bite size pieces for the baby, or using your own mouth to clean pacifiers.
- Parents can [access programs](#) for their baby including Health Access Nurturing Development Services (HANDS), First Steps, and Women, Infants and Children's Program (WIC). Contact your local health department for more information.
- [The American Academy of Pediatrics](#) recommends that every child have a dental provider by age one.



By taking proactive steps during pregnancy

and engaging in community programs, you can protect your oral health and contribute to the well-being of both yourself and your baby. Regular dental care, informed dietary choices, and accessing available resources can help both mom and baby during the pregnancy journey.

