

Dental Care

Proper care of your teeth and gums is especially important now that you are pregnant. If you have not had a professional dental cleaning within the past six months, we recommend that you do so early in your pregnancy. If you have recently had a dental check-up, we recommend that you continue your preventive visits to the dentist every six months. Dental cleanings and needed dental care are both safe and encouraged before, during and after pregnancy. It is important to floss daily and to brush your teeth in the morning after breakfast and before bed at night. Try to replace juices with water and avoid concentrated sugary foods/drinks. Chewing xylitol-containing gum after meals or sweets may help decrease the likelihood of cavities during your pregnancy.

If your dentist thinks you need dental care beyond cleanings during pregnancy, the following guidance may help you and your dentist make good decisions about your care:

- The x-rays normally taken during routine dental care may be taken during pregnancy. Dental x-rays are considered very safe in pregnancy if you shield your abdomen and pelvis with a lead gown or drape during the x-rays. All dentists who take x-rays have these kinds of gowns as they use them routinely.
- Unless you have an allergy to them, many antibiotics are safe for you and the baby during pregnancy. Common antibiotics that are considered safe include penicillins and cephalosporins. Sulfa antibiotics are safe although when given just before delivery babies have an increased risk of jaundice. Quinolones and tetracycline type antibiotics should be avoided if possible as they can have an impact on the baby's growth and development of bones and teeth.
- If you need pain medication, Tylenol® (acetaminophen) and narcotics are safe as long as they are taken in typical doses. You should avoid Motrin® or Advil® (ibuprofen) and other related medications called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) unless you specifically talk to your provider. These drugs can affect the baby's kidneys, heart and lungs if they are taken too long or too late in the pregnancy.