

## **Dental Health During Pregnancy**

There are many myths about dental health and pregnancy. Although you have a lot to think about during this time, oral health is important during pregnancy and should not be neglected.

The following facts are true and will help to improve your dental health during your pregnancy!

- Nutrition is very important during pregnancy because your baby gets nutrients from your system. By eating right, you can start caring for your baby's teeth as soon as you find out you are pregnant. Be sure to include foods with calcium and vitamin D in your diet. Your doctor can give you information to help you eat well during pregnancy.
- Some women have dental problems during pregnancy. Hormonal changes can make your gums sore, swollen and bleeding. This can be prevented by brushing and flossing your teeth daily. If you did not have your teeth cleaned before you found out that you were pregnant, having your teeth cleaned by a dental hygienist or dentist early in your pregnancy may help prevent most gum problems.
- Some women develop a "pregnancy tumor" on their gums. This is a painless bump on your gums that can be pink, red or purple. It will usually not cause any problems, but care should be taken to keep the area around the tumor clean. See your dentist if you think you may be having this problem.
- Dental problems also can be caused by snacking more often. When the snacks are sweet, tooth decay or cavities occur. It is important to snack less often, or eat sweets at the end of a meal instead of between meals.
- It is important to see your dentist and dental hygienist during your pregnancy to prevent dental problems. Be sure to make a dental appointment before your baby is born. After birth, it may be several months before you will be able to find the time for an appointment.
- If you need to have emergency dental care during your pregnancy, you may need to have some X-rays taken of your teeth. Always be sure to remind your dental care professional of your pregnancy. Care should be taken to limit or avoid nitrous oxide, some prescribed antibiotics and some pain medications. Your dentist can contact your obstetrician with any questions.

**For more information, contact**

**Illinois Department of Public Health, Division of Oral Health  
535 W. Jefferson St., Springfield, IL 62761  
217-785-4899, TTY (hearing impaired use only) 800-547-0466**

NOTE: This fact sheet was derived from one previously published by the Arizona Department of Health Services.