



Oral Health Care During the Perinatal Period / Infant Oral Health Care

Categories : [Children and Families](#), [Health Issues](#)

Consequences of Poor Oral Health During Pregnancy:

A major entryway into the body, the mouth can become a source of disease or a pathway affecting other parts of the body. Oral disease is associated with an increased risk for poor birth and pregnancy outcomes, such as:

- A preterm birth
- Low birth weight for your baby
- Gestational diabetes during pregnancy
- Periodontal disease (“pregnancy gingivitis” – inflammation of the gums)

What You Need To Do:

Take care of your teeth:

- Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush twice a day
- Floss once a day
- If you can’t brush your teeth because you feel sick, rinse your mouth with water or a mouth rinse that has fluoride.
- Visit your dentist before, during, or after pregnancy, even when there are no obvious signs of oral disease.

Eat healthy foods and snacks:

- Eat fruits, vegetables, whole grain products
- Dairy products like milk, yogurt, or cheese
- Lean meats, fish, poultry, eggs, beans, and nuts
- Eat foods that have sugar at mealtimes only
- Drink water or low-fat milk instead of fruit juices, soda and sports drinks
- Drink water at least a few times a day, especially between meals and snacks
- Cut down on sweets like candy, cookies and cakes
- Look for sugar free products, such as sugarless gum or sugarless candy

After the Baby is Born:

It is important to keep brushing with toothpaste and flossing, eating healthy foods and getting dental care after the baby is born.

Here are some important oral health care tips for your baby’s gums and teeth:

- Breastfeed for at least 6 months.
- Germs can pass from your mouth to the baby’s mouth through saliva. Use a different spoon to taste your baby’s food. Clean your baby’s pacifier with water. Do not use your mouth to clean it.
- Clean your baby’s gums with a soft cloth after every feeding even before the first teeth come in.
- Clean your baby’s gums and teeth twice a day as soon as you see the first tooth (usually around 6 to 10 months). Use a soft cloth or a toothbrush with soft bristles and a small head designed for babies.
- Do not put your baby to sleep with a bottle filled with sugary beverages, like soda, formula, or juice. Even milk in a bottle at bedtime can cause tooth decay. If your baby is used to being put to sleep with a bottle, offer a bottle filled with plain water.



- Make an appointment for your baby to see a dentist by the time he or she is 1 year old.

Resources Available:

- [Connecticut Department of Public Health, “Home By One” Oral Health Program](#), builds partnerships with dental and medical practitioners, social service providers, parents and caregivers in Connecticut to focus on oral health for children by age one. For more details contact the Office of Oral Health at (860) 509-8251.
- American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry: Find a Dentist link: <http://www.aapd.org/finddentist>
- National Institute of Health: Find Low-Cost Dental care: <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/health-info>
- Learn more about infant oral health from the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry link at <http://www.aap.org/>

To Find Providers in Connecticut’s Community Resources Database:

Search by term:

- [Dental Care](#)
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SOURCE: Connecticut Department of Public Health; American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry; National Institute of Health

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