The Importance of Maintaining Good Oral Health While Pregnant

Let your dental office know once you are pregnant and how far along you are when you make your appointment. Let them know what medications you're taking as well or if you have a high-risk pregnancy. Your dentist and physician may recommend that some treatments be postponed.

Dental Risks While Pregnant

Pregnancy Gingivitis

According to the Center for Disease Control, nearly 60 to 75 percent of pregnant women have gingivitis, which is an early stage of periodontal disease. During pregnancy, hormones rise to cause gums to swell and bleed increasing the likelihood of food getting trapped in them, which can lead to severe oral issues such as gingivitis and periodontal disease. These oral infections can cause serious harm to your baby including premature birth. Actually, up to 18 out of 100 premature births are believed to be triggered by periodontal disease.

Tooth Decay

A woman who is pregnant may also be more prone to cavities. This can be due to eating more carbohydrates than usual, or morning sickness. Morning Sickness can increase the amount of acid your mouth is exposed to, which can eat away at your tooth's enamel.

Pregnancy Tumors

On some occasions, pregnant women may experience overgrowths of tissue called "pregnancy tumors" which appear on the gums most often during the second trimester. They have a red, raw-looking raspberry-like appearance, and will usually go away on their own once the baby is born.

The elevated risk of dental problems during pregnancy means it's essential to take good care of your teeth during this time. It's recommended to brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste. *While fluoride may have been somewhat of a risk in TTC, you are encouraged to use it during pregnancy.* Three months into your pregnancy, your baby develops teeth and the fluoride can help him or her grow strong, healthy teeth.

Hopefully, you won't experience any dental emergencies while pregnant, but there is the chance that you might. If you need to have a root canal done while pregnant, you can easily find an endodontist near you and have your mouth be healthy in no time.

Don't forget to floss at least once a day. Brushing gently, using floss, and a fluoride, non-alcoholic based mouthwash multiple times daily will preserve your oral health throughout pregnancy.

Whitening your teeth is not recommended during pregnancy at any stage.

Dental Work During Pregnancy

If you need dental work during pregnancy, it's best to wait until after the first trimester. The first trimester is the time all of your baby's organs are being formed, so it's best not to introduce anything that could potentially be a risk to your baby's development.

If you need a dental x-ray during your second trimester, tell your dentist about your pregnancy. He or she may forgo the x-ray or if it's really needed, use two lead cover-ups over your belly.

If anesthesia must be administered during pregnancy, it's given in small doses until optimal comfort is achieved. Stress can have an adverse effect on you and your baby and can reduce the effectiveness of the anesthesia.

Following the dental procedure, you may be prescribed antibiotics to prevent infection. It's important to take this medication because infection can lead to problems with your baby's development.

Tylenol is the only suitable pain relief for pregnant women, unless the pain is extreme.

As mentioned in the TTC section, amalgam fillings contain mercury. This mercury crosses the placenta. While research has shown no health effects from the fillings in pregnant women, some may want to avoid them. High levels of mercury can lead to brain damage, and hearing and vision problems for the developing baby.

Dental health is more important than ever while you are pregnant. As scary as it may be to go to the dentist or clean your teeth with fluoride, trust in the research that advises it's best for you and your baby's development.

For more information on Dental Care & Pregnancy
https://www.emergencydentistsusa.com/dental-care-pregnancy/