

# Tips for Good Oral Health During Pregnancy

The health of your teeth and gums is **important** because it affects the health of you and your child. Getting dental care while you are pregnant is **safe** and **covered** by Maryland Medicaid during pregnancy. If your mouth is healthy, you will be giving your baby a healthy start! Doing the following will help keep you and your baby healthy.

## Practice Good Oral Hygiene

- Brush teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss once a day to prevent red, puffy gums.
- If you vomit, rinse your mouth with a teaspoon of baking soda in a cup of water to stop acid from attacking your teeth. Delay toothbrushing for about an hour.



## Get Dental Care

- Tell the dentist and dental hygienist that you are pregnant and your due date.
- All dental treatment should be completed before delivery.
- Dental care, including the use of X-rays, most pain medications, and local anesthesia, is safe during pregnancy.
- Changes to your body when you are pregnant may make your gums sore or puffy and may make them bleed. This problem is called gingivitis (inflammation of the gums). If gingivitis is not treated, it may lead to periodontal (gum) disease, which can cause tooth loss.

## Eat Healthy Foods

- Eat a balanced and nutritious diet.
- Avoid foods high in sugar. Also avoid beverages high in sugar like juice, fruit-flavored drinks, and soda.
- If you have problems with nausea, eat small amounts of healthy foods throughout the day.
- Drink fluoridated water throughout the day, especially between meals. Most tap water in Maryland contains fluoride which prevents cavities. Most water filters do not remove fluoride.



## Practice Other Healthy Behaviors

- Attend prenatal classes.
- Stop use of all tobacco products and recreational drugs. Avoid secondhand smoke.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Take folic acid and iron supplements as recommended by your prenatal doctor or nurse.

To find a Medicaid dentist, visit: [OralHealth4BetterHealth.com](http://OralHealth4BetterHealth.com)

# Tips for Good Oral Health During Infancy

## To Keep Child Cavity Free:

- Beginning soon after birth, clean your child's gums daily with a clean, wet washcloth.



- Do not put your child to bed with a bottle. Children should be weaned from a bottle between 12 and 14 months.
- Avoid saliva-sharing activities (sharing utensils, cleaning pacifier in your mouth) as cavity-causing bacteria can be passed from mother to child.
- Once teeth come in, start brushing twice a day with a smear of fluoride toothpaste for children under age 3. For children ages 3 and above, a pea-size amount should be used.



smear  
under age 3

pea-size  
age 3 and older

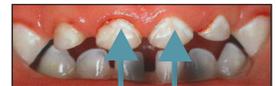
- Avoid giving your child foods and drinks containing sugar. Children should not have fruit juice during their first year.



## Tips on How to Brush a Young Child's Teeth

- Use a small, child-sized toothbrush.
- Lay child down on a comfortable surface (changing table).
- Position yourself behind child's head.
- Give child a toy to hold.
- Brush 2 - 3 teeth at a time.

- Lift the child's lip once a month to look for cavities. The child should see a dentist immediately if there are signs of cavities.
- At one year well-child visit, ask doctor about child's oral health and fluoride.
- Children should have their first dental visit by age 1.



**Early Cavities**

Chalky white lines at the gum line that can be healed.



**Moderate Cavities**

Looks like teeth are melting or chipping.



**Severe Cavities**

Brown/Black in color; may be chipped or broken.



## How to Relieve Teething Pain

- Use over-the-counter pain medicine (acetaminophen, ibuprofen) and/or chilled teething rings.
- Do not use teething gels.