Keeping Your Mouth Healthy During Pregnancy

A healthy mouth during pregnancy is connected to having a healthy baby. It is important to see a dentist as a part of your prenatal care.

As your body changes during pregnancy, so does your mouth. You may notice changes in your mouth, teeth, and gums as early as the first three months of pregnancy.

Doctors say that it is extra important that you visit the dentist while you are pregnant so that your mouth stays healthy, just like the rest of you. The dentist or dental hygienist will give you tips on how to care for your mouth, and will look to see if you are at risk for oral health problems, like gum disease. Pregnant women who have gum disease may be more likely to have a baby that is born too early and too small, so it is important to pay attention to your oral health.

How your mouth changes during pregnancy:

- Your gums may become more sensitive, tender, or irritated. Your gums may bleed due to something called gingivitis. Gingivitis happens when plaque builds up on your teeth and irritates your gums. Your gums get red, swollen, and more likely to bleed. If left untreated, this could lead to periodontal disease, which attacks the bone and gums around your teeth and is a serious problem.
- Round soft growths may appear on your gums.
- Your teeth may weaken due to acids from vomiting from morning sickness or acid reflux.

If you are pregnant or are trying to get pregnant, there are steps you can take to help ensure a healthy mouth:

- Visit your dentist for regular check-ups and cleanings
- Brush 2-3 times daily with a soft bristle toothbrush
- Use a toothpaste with fluoride
- Floss every night before bed
- Maintain a healthy diet with snacks high in protein and calcium (such as low fat yogurts and cheeses)
- Replace soft drinks and juices with low fat milk and water

Now that you have a good relationship with your dentist, they can give you information how to care for your baby's mouth and teeth!