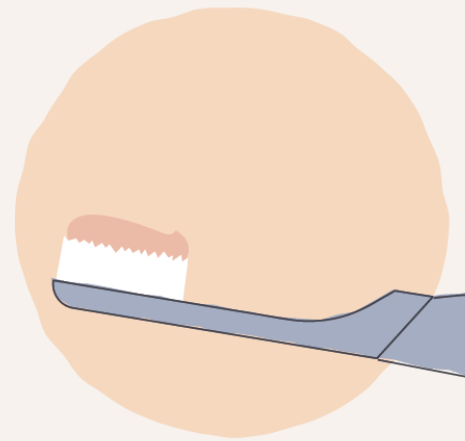


my body

dental care in pregnancy

It is safe to get a dental exam and cleaning during pregnancy. Going to the dentist can help make sure any dental problems, like infections, are treated. Dental infections can be a risk factor for some problems in pregnancy, such as preterm labor (when the baby is born too early). Parents with dental infections can also pass the bacteria to their baby, which can cause the baby to get cavities or gum disease once they start getting teeth.



The sooner the better

Getting care sooner, rather than at the end of or after pregnancy, is recommended. Continue with your scheduled routine cleanings and exams. If there is a problem, do not wait to reach out to your dentist or your midwife for help.

Dental care and prevention at home

You should brush your teeth at least two times per day with a soft-bristled brush. Brush for two minutes each time. Floss once per day. Toothpaste with fluoride can help protect your teeth from cavities. Your dentist can also apply a protective fluoride treatment by brushing it onto your teeth during a routine cleaning.

Vomiting

Vomiting often in pregnancy can cause stomach acid to damage your teeth. Do not brush your teeth right after vomiting. Instead, make a mouth rinse of 1 cup of water and 1 teaspoon of baking soda (spit it out, and not swallow it). This will help reduce the effect of the acid. Later, you can brush your teeth as usual.

Treatments

Antibiotics

Dental infections may be treated with antibiotics during pregnancy. Ask your midwife if you have questions about the safety of any antibiotics you are taking. However, just medicine alone may not be enough to cure the problem. Some dental problems also need a dentist to work on the affected area to remove the infection.

Anesthetics

To help dental work to be less painful, your dentist may ask to use a medicine that numbs the mouth during the procedure called an **anesthetic**. This medicine is usually Lidocaine and includes a small amount of epinephrine. This is considered safe during pregnancy, but the dentist may want a letter of approval from your midwife before using it.

X-Rays

To diagnose a dental issue, your dentist may recommend getting an x-ray of your mouth. This is usually considered safe in pregnancy because the amount of radiation is so low. Your hygienist will place a protective cover over your body to block the x-rays. The dentist may want permission from your midwife to take an x-ray.

Postnatal dental care

In addition to a routine dental visit in pregnancy, you may also need to schedule a dentist appointment for after pregnancy. This appointment can help the dentist see if issues in pregnancy (such as frequent vomiting or hormonal changes) have led to any dental concerns

Choosing a dentist may depend on your insurance

Medicaid usually covers some dental care for pregnant people (even if they didn't include dental coverage before your pregnancy). But, not all dentists accept every insurance plan. You can check with your insurance company to find a local dentist who is contracted with your plan. You can also ask your midwife about recommendations.

Please tell your midwife if you have any dental concerns, need help finding care, or need a letter for permission to treat.

Helpful websites with more information

American Dental Association: <https://quilted.link/ada>

March of Dimes Dental Health in Pregnancy: <https://quilted.link/mod-dental>