



A Healthy Mouth Matters during Pregnancy

During pregnancy, women living in tribal communities are more prone to cavities and gum disease. In fact, women with a lot of cavity-causing bacteria before or after a child's birth can pass these bacteria to their baby's mouth. This can raise the risk of cavities (tooth decay) as their baby's teeth appear.

To help your developing baby, eat healthy foods and avoid sugary drinks. Water is the healthiest drink for pregnant women. Becoming a mom is something to smile about! These tips can keep your mouth — and your baby's mouth — healthy.

Check the other side for tips to keep yourself and your baby healthy! →

Sources include the National Institutes of Health; CDC; American Dental Association; American Academy of Pediatrics; National Indian Health Board; and Children's Dental Health Project.

During Pregnancy

- Use your own toothbrush. Replace it every 3 months.
- Brush at least twice each day with a fluoride toothpaste. Fluoride is a natural mineral found in lakes, rivers, groundwater and oceans. This is nature's way to prevent tooth decay.
- See a dentist. Cleanings and X-rays are safe and help keep your teeth healthy.
- Drink plenty of tap water to keep hydrated.
- Limit sugary drinks, sticky candies, and chewing gum with sugar.

After Your Child Is Born

- Wipe your baby's gums after each feeding and before bedtime with a soft cloth.
- Once a child's teeth appear, use a toothbrush to brush them with a smear of fluoride toothpaste.
- Take your child to the dentist when their first tooth comes in, but no later than their first birthday.
- Between ages 3 and 6, brush your child's teeth with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- If your baby drops a pacifier, don't use your spit (saliva) to "clean" it. This could spread cavity-causing germs to your baby's mouth.
- Don't dip pacifiers in honey or sugar because this can lead to cavities. Honey can cause a serious illness (botulism) in infants.

