GOOD ORAL HEALTH FOR TWO
Why are a mother’s teeth important to the health of her baby’s teeth?

- Babies can catch a cavity!
- Babies are born without decay-causing germs.
- The germs that cause cavities are passed to the baby from parents and family members.
Start Now

Taking care of your mouth while you are pregnant is important for you and your baby.

To keep you and your baby healthy:

• Brush
• Floss
• Eat healthy foods
• Regular dental checkups and treatment for yourself
Did you know?

Cavities and gum disease are caused by germs. If you have cavities that aren’t fixed, you can pass these germs to your baby after birth.

If you are pregnant and have gum disease, you may be more likely to have a baby that is born too early or too small.
How cavities form

* Plaque is the sticky, yellow stuff that forms on your teeth. Plaque is full of germs. To prevent cavities, brush off the plaque and the germs.
Gingivitis

- Is a mild form of gum disease.
- Makes gums red, puffy, or sore.
- Occurs when germs in plaque are not cleaned off teeth everyday.

When you are pregnant, you can be more likely to get gingivitis!
Periodontitis

- Periodontitis is a more severe form of gum disease.

- Gums begin to separate from the teeth, and teeth can become loose.

If you are pregnant and have periodontitis, you may be more likely to have a baby that is born too early or too small.
Brush and floss

• Brush and floss every day to remove plaque from your teeth.

• Removing plaque helps prevent gum disease and cavities!

• Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush twice each day.

• Use a toothpaste with fluoride in it.

• Floss once a day before bedtime.
What if you vomit or feel nauseas?

*If you are too nauseated to brush your teeth…*
  - Rinse your mouth with water or a mouth rinse that has fluoride.

*If you vomit…*
  - Rinse your mouth with water to remove the acid left on your teeth.

*After vomiting, wait 20 minutes before brushing your teeth!*
Eat well

Eat healthy foods:
• Fruits and vegetables
• Whole grain products like bread or crackers
• Dairy products like milk, yogurt or cheese
• Fish, chicken, eggs, beans and nuts

Eat fewer sweets like:
• Candy
• Cookies
• Cake
Drink well

Drink water at least a few times a day, especially between meals and snacks.

Drink water or low-fat milk.

Avoid:

- Soda
- Juice
- Sweetened iced tea
- Fruit-flavored drinks

The more often you drink sugary drinks, the more likely cavities will form!
Get dental care

• Visit a dentist for a check-up if you are pregnant or if you’re planning a pregnancy!

• It is safe and recommended to have dental care when you are pregnant.

Do not put it off until after you have the baby!
After your baby is born...

What are some things that you can do early in your baby’s life so that they can have a healthy smile?
At nap time or bedtime

You can put your baby to sleep with a bottle but:

- Put ONLY WATER in the bottle; and

- NEVER put breast milk, formula, milk, juice, or sugary drinks (like fruit-flavored drinks or soda) in the bottle during sleep time.
Cleaning

• Clean your baby’s gums after every feeding or at least twice a day even before the first teeth come in.
• Use a clean, damp washcloth.

When your baby gets her/his first tooth:
• Begin brushing his teeth twice a day.
• Use only a small smear of toothpaste.
• Use a toothpaste with fluoride in it.
• You should brush your baby’s teeth until the age of 8.
Don’t share

You can pass germs **that cause tooth decay** from your mouth to your baby’s mouth.

- Do not put your baby’s spoon in your mouth. Use a clean spoon to taste your baby’s food.
  
  - Clean your baby’s pacifier with water. *Do not use your mouth to clean it.*
  
- Do not share toothbrushes!
  
- Babies, children and grown-ups should have their own toothbrush!
Every month:

- Check for white spots on your baby’s teeth at the gum line.

- White spots can be the beginnings of cavities. If you see white spots, bring your baby to the dentist.
Dental care for your baby

Take your baby to the dentist by the time he/she is one year old to have their teeth and gums checked.
Mothers - continue good oral health habits!

• Keep flossing and brushing with fluoride toothpaste!

• Chew Xylitol gum (Ice Cubes, Spry)

• Continue to eat healthy foods.

• Dental check-up at least once a year.

• When your mouth is healthy, your baby is more likely to have a healthy mouth too!
Resources

Adapted from;

Massachusetts Dental Society Foundation and the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Lawrence, Massachusetts.


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Northeast Center for Healthy Communities, Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Lawrence, Massachusetts
http://nc4hc.org/

Further Reading

“Mommy it hurts to chew” 2006
Center for Oral Health
www.centerfororalhealth.org

Improving Access to Oral Health Care for Vulnerable and Underserved Populations 2011
Institute of Medicine and National Research Council
www.nap.edu