



Pregnancy and dental health

Overview:

- During pregnancy, a lot of physical changes occur, which can affect a woman's oral health.
- New dietary habits and hormonal changes are the most common causes of oral and dental problems during pregnancy.
- Some of these problems include: periodontitis, dental erosion and caries, and benign pregnancy tumors in the gums.
- Before any procedure is taken, your dentist must be informed that you are pregnant.
- It is specifically essential to look after dental health during pregnancy.



What are Common dental problems during pregnancy?

- **Gingivitis:** It can happen due to hormonal changes which increase the response of gum tissue to bacteria.
- **Tooth decay:** Tooth decay is not a disease that occurs due to pregnancy. It is caused by bacteria and wrong eating habits. During pregnancy, your diet may change (e.g., increased snacking), or the acidity of the mouth could increase due to vomiting, dry mouth, or poor oral hygiene caused by nausea and vomiting.
- **Dental erosion:** Vomiting occurs as a result of morning sickness. During the first trimester of pregnancy, vomiting and reflux tend to be frequent, which causes stomach acids to touch your teeth.
- **Pregnancy tumors (pyogenic granuloma):** It is an increased growth of tissue on the gums, which may occur due to hormonal changes in the body.

Gingivitis symptoms during pregnancy:

- Redness and swelling of the gums
- Gums bleeding after brushing or flossing
- Teeth sensitivity
- Difficulty or pain chewing
- Tooth loss



Preventing oral and dental problems during pregnancy:

- Keep your teeth especially clean during pregnancy, because pregnancy can make you more prone to gingivitis.
- Ask your dentist if applying new fillings can be delayed until you give birth or replaced with crowns.
- Brush your teeth twice a day with a soft-bristle brush for 2 minutes. Use a toothpaste that contains fluoride. Also, make sure you floss at least once a day.
- Use a mouthwash that is free of alcohol, sugars, or fresheners that irritate the gums.
- Rinse your mouth thoroughly after every meal.
- Your dentist may recommend using topical fluoride to decrease teeth erosion.
- Do not delay treatment of minor dental problems to avoid their development.
- Avoid smoking (both first-hand and second hand).
- Chew your food well to strengthen the jaw muscles, and facilitate digestion and metabolism.

