



# Pregnancy: How preventing gum disease is good for you and baby - Page 2

By Dr Matthew Fleming & Dr Dana Horng



## Diet Continued

During pregnancy eat nutritious well-balanced meals made up of foods from the major food groups; breads, cereals and other grains; fruits and vegetables; meat, fish poultry and protein alternatives; and milk, yogurt and cheese. When snacking, choose foods that are nutritious, such as raw fruits and vegetables, and dairy products. Following your physician's advice regarding diet is your wisest source.

## Gum Health

During pregnancy, your body's hormone levels rise considerably. Gingivitis (infection of the gums) is especially common during the second to eighth months of pregnancy, and may cause red, puffy or tender gums that tend to bleed when you brush and floss. This gum issue is an exaggerated response to plaque and is caused by an increased level of progesterone in your system. More frequent visits to the dentist and hygienist during pregnancy present an option to maintain gum health and to prevent gum disease/infection-causing bacteria to affect the unborn child. Good oral care at home is necessary, including daily brushing and flossing.



## Regular dental visits/radiographs

Radiographs may be needed for dental treatment or a

dental emergency that can't wait until after the baby is born. Untreated dental infections can pose a risk to the unborn child; and dental treatment may be necessary to maintain the health of the mother and child. Radiation from dental X-rays is extremely low.

Due to this low exposure of radiation, dental radiographs are not contraindicated if a woman is trying to become pregnant or is breast feeding, and will be

performed at the discretion of the dentist following a risk analysis in consultation with the patient.

## Health issues?

Ongoing research is showing that periodontal disease may be linked to heart disease, diabetes, respiratory disease and osteoporosis. The bacteria

associated with periodontal disease can travel into the blood stream and pose a threat to other parts of the body. Healthy gums may lead to a healthier body.

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