

CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH PROGRAM

WIC Newsletter

2011-2012



Pregnancy Pink in the Sink

A classic sign of gingivitis (the first stage of gum or periodontal disease) is bleeding during tooth brushing. During pregnancy, reversible mild inflammation of the gums, known as "pregnancy gingivitis," is estimated to occur in 50% - 70% of pregnant women.

Hormones also triple in quantity between the time of conception and the seventh month of pregnancy. These changes, especially the increased level of progesterone, may make it easier for certain gingivitis

causing bacteria to grow. Additionally, increased hormone levels make gum tissue more sensitive to plaque and exaggerate the body's response to these irritants. Becoming pregnant can exacerbate existing gum disease.

Hormones also tell the kidneys to retain water in order to build blood volume to have enough to nourish the placenta. A pregnant woman has 40% more fluid in her body. As a result, this increases the amount of fluid in all the cells of the body,

including the gum tissues, which causes them to become puffy.

Untreated gingivitis can lead to periodontal disease, which can erode the bone and other supporting structures of the teeth and ultimately result in tooth loss.



Due to the link between periodontal disease and adverse birth outcomes, it is recommended that you ask the following two simple questions to expectant moms:

1. Do you have bleeding gums, toothache, cavities, loose teeth, teeth that don't look right, or other problems in your mouth?

- If a woman answers yes, you should: refer the patient to a dentist, stress the importance of the dental visit within a month, assist the pregnant woman in accessing dental care.

- If a woman answers no to the first question, you should follow up with question 2.

2. Have you had a dental visit in the last 6 months?

- If a woman answers yes, you should encourage her to keep the next appointment, which may occur during pregnancy, and reassure her that dental care during pregnancy is safe and essential. Counsel her that

delaying treatment may result in risk to her and indirectly to her baby.

- If a woman answers no, you should encourage the pregnant woman to make a dental appointment as soon as possible, preferably before 20 weeks of gestation.

Morning Sickness and Oral Health

Acid from chronic vomiting can erode tooth enamel.



Recommend to your clients experiencing morning sickness to:

- Rinse the mouth with a teaspoon of baking soda (sodium

bicarbonate) dissolved in a cup of water after vomiting, to neutralize acid prior to brushing teeth.

- Gently brush teeth with fluoridated toothpaste twice a day to prevent damage to tooth surfaces.



Lift the Lip!

Did you know that there is an easy way for moms to protect their children's teeth?

"Lift the Lip" is a technique that moms can use to recognize the early signs of tooth decay.

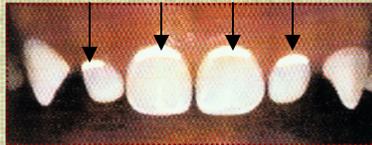
Instruct moms to look once a month for small white "chalky" lines where the gums and teeth meet. Moms should also check for yellow, brown and black spots, which are also signs of tooth decay.

The "Lift the Lip" technique is simple:

1. Use the index fingers and thumbs to gently lift the child's upper lip.
2. Look for signs of decay in the following area:
 - Upper six front teeth
 - Behind/back of the six upper front teeth
 - Chewing surfaces of back teeth

Be sure to discuss early preventive measures including

regular teeth cleaning, weaning children from a bottle by age 1, not allowing a child to sleep with a bottle, and regular visits to the dentist beginning at the age one.



Did You Know?

- Oral hygiene should begin at the first sign of baby's first tooth.



Encourage moms to wipe their babies' teeth and gums twice a day using a clean washcloth, gauze pad, or baby tender.

- Acidic drinks can cause demineralization of tooth enamel resulting in tooth erosion or decay. Common acidic drinks to avoid include diet sodas, sports drinks, wine and soft drinks. Limiting the frequency of consumption and the use of a straw can also minimize damage.



- According to former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, "If you don't have oral health, you're not healthy." Poor oral health status has been associated with pre-

"If you don't have oral health, you're not healthy."

term birth, low birth weight, preeclampsia (toxemia), heart disease, respiratory disease, and diabetes.

Recent research also suggests linkages between periodontal disease and Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, osteoporosis and chronic kidney disease.

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NJ Dental Clinic Directory

The 2012 New Jersey Dental Clinic Directory is a reference tool that may be used to provide a central source of information on public dental clinic services in New Jersey. These clinic services are primarily provided by local health departments, hospitals, and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). To download a copy of the directory, visit: www.dentalclinics.nj.gov

