

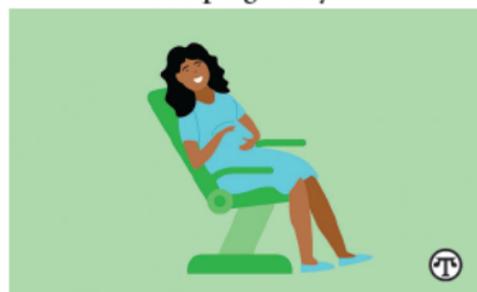


## Maternal Health And Dental Health: How They're Linked

(NAPS)—Every step of the way, women, especially mothers, have a lot to juggle. While trying to conceive, being pregnant, raising children and going through menopause, their to-do lists are long. One important task which may not be the first to come to mind is maintaining good oral health.

“Oral health plays a role in all stages of life and it pops up often for mothers,” said Kyle Dosch, DDS, a licensed dentist who serves as Delta Dental of Washington’s dental director. “Demonstrating and teaching the importance of good oral health habits is critical to the overall health and well-being of you and your family.”

### Pre-pregnancy



There is evidence to suggest a correlation between oral health and fertility. Women with periodontal disease took nearly seven months to conceive, whereas women without periodontal disease took only five months, on average.

### Early Pregnancy



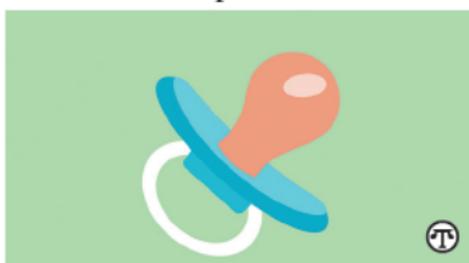
Many expectant mothers experience morning sickness and, as bothersome as it is to go through, it can also have negative effects on a woman’s oral health, particularly her teeth. Stomach acid can weaken tooth enamel, leading to greater risk for cavities. Dentists recommend rinsing your mouth with water after vomiting to help wash away the acid. Choosing healthy snacks such as fruits and vegetables, which can help clean bacteria off teeth, as well as plenty of water, are best for when pregnancy cravings kick in.

### During Pregnancy: What To Do When You're Brushing For Two



Up to 75% of pregnant women have gingivitis, an early stage of periodontal disease. Periodontitis has been linked with having a negative effect on pregnancy, inducing premature birth or low birth weight of the baby. Regular dentist check-ups, brushing and flossing can help prevent this.

### Postpartum



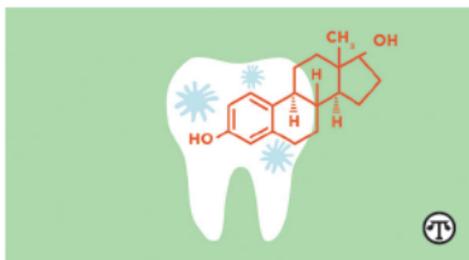
Mothers with tooth decay can pass cavity-causing bacteria to their babies by doing such things as cleaning pacifiers in their own mouth. Rinsing with clean water is a safer way for mom to keep an eye on a baby’s oral health.

### Motherhood



Children of mothers who have high levels of untreated cavities or oral health problems are three times more likely to have cavities. This can be due to poor education on oral health or from sharing drinks and utensils. This can transfer cavity-causing bacteria from a mom’s mouth to a child’s. Taking time to brush and floss each day together can help keep mom and kids on track for their oral health goals.

### Perimenopause And Menopause



Teeth and gums are highly susceptible to hormonal changes which take place before and during menopause. Because of these hormonal changes, a woman’s body can have a harder time fighting off minor infections and maintaining a healthy balance between useful and harmful bacteria within the mouth and on the gums. These hormonal changes can also cause increased sensitivity for teeth.

Visiting the dentist regularly will help keep these risks at bay.

### Learn More

For further information about your oral health, visit Delta Dental of Washington’s blog at [www.deltadentalwa.com/blog](http://www.deltadentalwa.com/blog).

