

# After Your Baby Is Born

After your baby is born, it is important for you to keep brushing with toothpaste. You also need to floss, eat healthy foods, and get dental care. When your mouth is healthy, your baby is more likely to have a healthy mouth, too.

## Care for Your Baby's Gums and Teeth

- Breast milk is best! Breastfeed your baby for 6 months or longer if you can.
- Germs can pass from your mouth to your baby's mouth. Use a different spoon to taste your baby's food. Clean your baby's pacifier with water. Do not use your mouth to clean it.
- Clean your baby's gums after every feeding even before her first teeth come in. Use a clean, damp washcloth or a toothbrush with soft bristles and a small head made for babies.
- When your baby gets his first tooth (usually around 6 to 10 months), begin brushing his teeth with toothpaste with fluoride twice a day. Use a small smear of toothpaste.
- Do not put your baby to sleep with a bottle filled with breast milk, formula, juice, or sugary drinks like fruit-flavored drinks or pop (soda).
- Take your baby to the dentist by the time she is 1 year old to have her teeth and gums checked.



## Resources

### Finding a Dentist

- <http://www.aapd.org/finddentist>
- <http://www.ada.org/ada/findadentist/advancedsearch.aspx>
- <http://www.knowyourteeth.com/findadentist>

### Finding Low-Cost Dental Care

- <http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/FindingDentalCare/ReducedCost/FLCDC.htm>

### Finding Dental Insurance Coverage

- <https://www.healthcare.gov>

Cite as: Holt K, Clark M, Barzel R. 2009. *Two Healthy Smiles: Tips to Keep You and Your Baby Healthy* (rev.). Washington, DC: National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center.

*Two Healthy Smiles: Tips to Keep You and Your Baby Healthy* (rev.) © 2009 by the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center, Georgetown University. Third printing.

This publication was made possible by grant number H47MC00048 from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Permission is given to photocopy this publication or to forward it, in its entirety, to others. Requests for permission to use all or part of the information contained in this publication in other ways should be sent to the address below.

National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center  
Georgetown University  
Phone: (202) 784-9771  
E-mail: [OHRCinfo@georgetown.edu](mailto:OHRCinfo@georgetown.edu)  
Website: <http://www.mchoralhealth.org>



# Two Healthy Smiles

## Tips to Keep You and Your Baby Healthy



Taking care of your mouth while you are pregnant is important for you and your baby. Brushing, flossing, eating healthy foods, and getting dental checkups and treatment will help keep you and your baby healthy.



Changes to your body when you are pregnant can make your gums sore, puffy, and red if you do not brush and floss every day. This problem is called gingivitis (gin-gih-vi-tis). If gingivitis is not treated, it may lead to periodontal (pear-ee-oh-don-tuhl) disease. This disease can cause tooth loss.

After your baby is born, take care of your baby's gums and teeth too.

Give your baby a healthy start! Here are tips to keep you and your baby's teeth and gums healthy.



## While You Are Pregnant

### *Brush and Floss*

- To prevent or control tooth decay, brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush and toothpaste with fluoride (floor-ide) twice a day.
- Floss once a day before bedtime.
- If you cannot brush your teeth because you feel sick, rinse your mouth with water or a mouth rinse that has fluoride.
- If you vomit, rinse your mouth with water.

### *Eat Healthy Foods*

- Eat fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products like bread or crackers, and dairy products like milk, yogurt, or cheese. Lean meats, fish, chicken, eggs, beans, and nuts are also good choices. Eat foods that have sugar at mealtimes only.
- Drink water or low-fat milk instead of juice, fruit-flavored drinks, or pop (soda).
- Drink water at least a few times a day, especially between meals and snacks.
- Eat fewer sweets like candy, cookies, or cake. Drink fewer sugary drinks like fruit-flavored drinks or pop (soda). Eat sweets or drink sugary drinks at mealtimes only.
- Look for products, like chewing gum or mints, that contain xylitol (zy-lih-tohl).

### *Get Dental Care*

- Get a dental checkup. It is safe to have dental care when you are pregnant. Do not put it off until after you have the baby.
- Tell the dental office staff that you are pregnant and your due date. This will help the dental team keep you comfortable.
- The dental team may recommend rinses with fluoride or chewing gum with xylitol, which can help reduce bacteria that can cause tooth decay and gingivitis.
- Talk to your doctor if you need help getting dental care or making an appointment.

