

# Keep smiling while you are pregnant

Taking care of your teeth and gums during pregnancy is important for you and your baby.



# Looking after my teeth and gums while I'm pregnant



## My teeth and gums

A lot of changes happen to your body when you are pregnant.

- Morning sickness and some food cravings can increase your risk of having dental problems.
- Pregnancy hormones can affect gums and teeth. This may affect the health of your baby.
- If you have poor dental health your baby has more risk of having dental problems.

## Signs of gum disease:

- red, swollen or bleeding gums
- loose teeth
- bad breath.

## Signs of tooth decay:

- white spots on your teeth, near the gums
- cavities (or holes) in your teeth
- toothache
- bad breath.

# Looking after my teeth and gums while I'm pregnant



## Food and Drinks

Enjoy a healthy diet that is good for you and your baby.

### Eat:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Grain foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties eg. breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, couscous, oats, quinoa.
- Protein-rich foods eg. lean meat, fish, chicken, eggs and nuts.
- Calcium-rich foods eg. milk, cheese, yoghurt, mostly reduced fat.

### Drink:

- Water every day.
- Limit drinks such as sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials, fruit drinks, vitamin waters, energy and sports drinks.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol.

For more information around food and drinks, visit the Get Healthy Service [www.gethealthynsw.com.au/](http://www.gethealthynsw.com.au/)



## Brushing teeth

- Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day, morning and night.
- Use a soft toothbrush.
- Clean between your teeth with dental floss daily.
- If you have morning sickness DO NOT brush your teeth straight after vomiting – rinse your mouth with water and wipe some fluoride toothpaste over your teeth.



## Dental check-ups

- Have a dental check-up before or soon after you become pregnant.
- A dental practitioner will tell you if you have any problems in your mouth and can give you advice on how to keep your mouth healthy.
- It is SAFE to have dental treatment when you are pregnant.

Don't smoke or vape-it can cause gum disease, tooth decay, tooth loss and cancer of the mouth.

Talk to a health professional or call the Quitline 131 848 for help with giving up smoking and vaping.

# Tips for you and your baby

- Falling asleep with a bottle can lead to dental problems for your baby.
- Clean baby's mouth and gums with a soft cloth.
- Baby's first teeth start coming through around 6 months.
- Start offering a cup from 6 months.
- Brush baby's teeth as soon as they appear with a small soft toothbrush and water.
- Check baby's front teeth by lifting their lip for early signs of tooth decay.
- Plan a dental check-up for your little one around their 1st birthday.
- Clean your baby's dummy with water, not in your mouth.

**Keep your own teeth and gums clean and healthy as you can easily pass your germs to your baby's mouth on dummies, bottles and spoons.**

## For dental services in NSW

NSW Public Dental Services provide free general and emergency dental care for all children under the age of 18 with a Medicare card.

NSW Public Dental Services provide free general and emergency dental care for adults holding an Australian government concession card.

To access NSW Public Dental Services call: **1800 679 336**.

Some children (between 0 and 17 years) may be eligible for the Commonwealth Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS). For more information visit: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/cdbs](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/cdbs)

To find a private dentist go to [www.ada.org.au/Find-a-Dentist](http://www.ada.org.au/Find-a-Dentist)

If you need an Interpreter Service call **13 14 50**.

Further copies can be downloaded from NSW Health Website: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/aohs/resources.asp](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/aohs/resources.asp) or ordered from Better Health Centre Publications Warehouse (02) 9887 5450



The Centre for Oral Health Strategy would like to acknowledge that this resource was originally developed by Western Sydney University, Sydney & South Western Sydney Local Health Districts and The Australian Centre for Integrated Oral Health and revised by the Centre for Oral Health Strategy.

