

# Oral health FAQs for new or expectant parents

Q: Is it safe to have a dental check-up while pregnant?

A: Yes, it's actually recommended as hormonal changes can make mums-to-be more prone to dental issues.

Q: At what point in my pregnancy should I see a dentist?

A: If your last visit was more than six months ago or you're experiencing any issues you should make an appointment. Check-ups are free for pregnant women and new mums up to a year after your baby's birth.

Q: How can I prevent dental issues during pregnancy?

A: Brush twice a day, clean between your teeth (eg. flossing), visit the dentist and limit sugary foods. If you have morning sickness, rinse your mouth out with water after each episode to help prevent the acid in your vomit attacking your teeth. Wait about an hour before you brush your teeth as they will be softened by the acid from your stomach.

Q: What will my dentist need to know about my pregnancy?

A: That you are pregnant, when your due date is and if your pregnancy is high risk. You should also tell them if you're on medication or have any medical conditions.

Q: Are treatments safe while pregnant?

A: A dentist will only offer treatment if it's safe to do so. For x-rays, your dentist will decide whether it's best immediately or after your baby is born.

Q: I recently had my baby, what can I do to take care of their mouth before teeth come through?

A: Take a little trip to the dentist to make sure everything is developing normally. You can also get advice on breastfeeding, weaning and establishing good routines early. Trips as babies help get children used to the sights, sounds and smells of a practice.

Q: When should I start brushing my baby's teeth?

A: As soon as their first tooth breaks through. Use a tiny smear of fluoride toothpaste for babies and toddlers up to three, and a pea-sized amount for children aged three to six years.

Q: What should I do when my baby starts teething?

A: Teething rings can give some relief and distract from pain. At six months or older, try giving them raw fruit or vegetables to chew on under supervision. If teething is making your baby dribble more than usual, gently wiping their face may help prevent a rash.

Q: Should I give my baby a dummy?

A: Avoid using them after 12 months as this can encourage an open bite, which is when teeth move to make space for the dummy. They can also affect your child's speech development. Discourage them from talking or making sounds with a dummy or their thumb in their mouth, and don't dip dummies in anything sweet, such as sugar or jam.

**A LITTLE TRIP  
TO THE DENTIST**