New Moms
Information for moms and moms-to-be

The key to a child's good dental health begins before his or her teeth become visible. Here are some answers to some of the most frequently asked dental health questions relating to pregnancy, infants, toddlers and children.

1. **Does being pregnant affect my oral health?**
Yes... hormonal changes exaggerate the way gum tissues react to the irritants in plaque. Thorough brushing and flossing of your teeth twice daily to remove the plaque and eating a balanced diet will help to keep your gums healthy.

2. **Should I visit my CDA member dentist during my pregnancy?** Yes... you should continue regular dental visits. However, it is very important to let your CDA member dentist know that you are pregnant.

3. **Are x-rays safe during pregnancy?** Yes... x-rays are safe during pregnancy and are a vital tool used in helping to detect dental and other oral health problems. Only the x-rays that are necessary for treatment will be taken. You will be asked to wear a lead apron for extra protection.

4. **When will my infant begin to get teeth?** Tooth eruption varies from infant to infant. However, most infants will start to get teeth around six to 12 months of age.

5. **When should I begin to brush my infant's teeth?** Starting at birth, clean your infant's gums with a soft infant toothbrush, cotton gauze, or cloth and cool water. For infants under two years of age, parents should consult their child's dentist before introducing a fluoride toothpaste.

6. **How much fluoridated toothpaste should I use when brushing my child's teeth?** Beginning at 2 years of age, a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste should be used during brushing. Children should be encouraged to spit, not swallow, toothpaste, and the amount of toothpaste used can be increased after five or six years of age when the child can reliably do this.

7. **When should I take my baby in for his/her first dental visit?** The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and most other health organizations encourage parents and care providers to schedule an appointment when your child's first tooth erupts, usually between six and twelve months of age.

8. **How can I prevent my infant from getting early decay, know as early childhood caries or baby bottle tooth decay?** When placing your infant down to sleep (nap or nighttime), place only water in the bottle. Sugary liquids like formula, breast milk, juice and soda can pool around the infant's teeth and cause decay. Don't forget to clean or brush your infant's gums/teeth twice daily to remove food and plaque.

9. **What else can I do to keep my child's teeth healthy?** Children are not born with the bacteria that cause decay. They are exposed to these bacteria from their caregivers, especially their mothers. By keeping your teeth healthy and free from decay, you can help reduce your child's exposure to these bacteria and reduce the chances of early decay.

10. **What can I do to help my baby through teething?** Many babies like a teething ring, cool spoon, or cold wet washcloth. Some parents/care providers rub their infant's gums with a clean finger.

11. **Should I be giving my child a fluoride supplement?** Some infants should be receiving some form of fluoride supplement. However, it is very important to talk to your pediatrician or CDA member dentist to determine the proper dosage based upon the community in which you live. Some communities have naturally fluoridated water or have fluoride added to their drinking water. Children living in these communities should not receive additional supplementation.

12. **What are sealants?** A sealant is a clear, plastic material that is placed on the chewing surfaces of your child's back teeth. The sealant forms a coating to protect the tooth from bacteria and bits of food. Sealants can dramatically reduce the risk of decay for children and teens. Your CDA member dentist will evaluate your child's teeth as they erupt and recommend sealants as needed.

If you need more information, feel free to call us at 800.CDA.SMILE or email your questions or comments!