



Oral Health
& Pregnancy



Key messages

for non-dental
health professionals

Make sure that **gum disease**
does not become an
issue **during pregnancy**



Oral-health education:

As part of their regular care, health professionals should provide oral-health education and oral-health screening to pregnant women.

Oral-health history:

Health professionals should include an oral-health history as part of the patient's general health history, including questions such as: Do you have swollen gums? Do you have problems eating or chewing food? Are you suffering from oral pain or other oral problems?

Oral-health examination:

Health professionals should include an oral examination as part of their regular medical examination. This examination should assess the presence of bleeding in the margin between the teeth and the gingiva and overt gingival inflammation by asking the patient to open her mouth under a direct light and with the use of a tongue depressor. In the presence of these signs, the physician should refer the patient to an oral-health professional for adequate diagnosis and care.

Gingival inflammatory changes:

Health professionals should inform women of the frequent gingival inflammatory changes associated with pregnancy and assure them that these changes are not physiological and that they should be appropriately diagnosed and treated by an oral-health professional.

Adverse pregnancy outcomes:

Health professionals should also inform women that, in the presence of periodontitis, there may be a higher risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes. They should therefore always recommend that pregnant women visit an oral-health professional for a check-up early during gestation. This should be further emphasised to pregnant women at risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes because periodontal therapy may reduce the incidence of such outcomes.

Pre-pregnancy:

Health professionals who treat women who want to become pregnant should also recommend that their patients visit an oral-health professional and establish healthy periodontal conditions before pregnancy, because this may benefit the outcome of the planned pregnancy. In this regard, adverse pregnancy outcomes and periodontal disease share some important risk factors (such as smoking), so a healthy lifestyle should be encouraged and promoted.



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