



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
**ORAL HEALTH AND PREGNANCY**

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# Recommendations for women





**EFP**

European  
Federation of  
Periodontology

## *Introduction*

During pregnancy, increased hormonal levels can affect the way that the body reacts to dental plaque and this can lead to swollen and bleeding gums (gingivitis) and to the more serious form of gum disease known as periodontitis.

Associations between periodontal diseases and adverse pregnancy outcomes have been demonstrated – a pregnant woman with poor gum health may have a greater risk of suffering from pre-eclampsia, of giving birth prematurely, and of giving birth to an underweight child.

Specific oral-hygiene regimens and professional periodontal treatment have been shown to be safe when carried out on pregnant women, and efficient in reducing gingival inflammation and in enabling periodontal health to be maintained during pregnancy.

Current scientific understanding suggests that periodontal therapy might be more effective in reducing the risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes if it takes place before conception.

The following recommendations for women who are pregnant, or who are planning to have a baby, have been drawn up by expert periodontal specialists.

## *Recommendations for women*

### **Knowledge of symptoms:**

Women during pregnancy should have knowledge of the obvious signs of oral disease and should try to perform a self-evaluation to look for inflammatory changes of the gingiva or the presence of gingival bleeding. Other signs or symptoms – such as pain during mastication, oral halitosis, increased gingival recession, or tooth mobility – should alert women to the need to seek immediate oral care.

### **Gingival changes:**

Gingival inflammatory changes are frequent during pregnancy but that they are not physiological in nature. If such changes appear, they should be appropriately diagnosed and treated by an oral-health professional.

### **Prevention:**

Even in the absence of any sign of disease, pregnant women should seek an oral-health consultation – with their dentist or dental hygienist – as soon as possible for appropriate preventive measures. During this visit, they should ask the oral-health professional about the appropriate oral-hygiene measures and tools they should use during their pregnancy.

### **Periodontal disease:**

If a periodontal disease is diagnosed, pregnant women should know that both gingivitis and periodontitis can be treated safely during pregnancy. They should be informed that the risks of no treatment are significantly higher than the minimal trauma that might occur during therapy.

### **Periodontal treatment:**

Periodontal interventions have been shown to be effective in improving the periodontal status of pregnant women and pose no risk to general health. Pregnant women should also be aware that periodontal treatment (scaling and root planing) should be avoided in the first trimester and should be performed preferably during the second trimester.

### **X-rays and anaesthesia:**

Pregnant women should be aware that dental X-rays can be undertaken and local anesthesia can be delivered without additional risk either to the mother or the foetus.

### **Painkillers and antibiotics:**

Pregnant women should be aware that the use of common painkillers and of systemic antibiotics during periodontal treatment is generally safe. However, tetracyclines should be avoided.

### **Periodontal health and pregnancy complications:**

Pregnant women and women who plan to become pregnant should be aware that there may be a connection between their periodontal status, their overall health, and possible pregnancy complications. For this reason, periodontal treatment may be necessary, in which case it should be performed before conception or in the second trimester. Moreover, as adverse pregnancy outcomes and periodontitis share some important risk factors (e.g. smoking) pregnant women should be aware of the importance of healthy lifestyle habits.

# Oral Health and Pregnancy: the project

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## Oral Health & Pregnancy

*The aim of the Oral Health and Pregnancy project, a collaboration between the European Federation of Periodontology (EFP) and Oral-B, is to promote women's oral health during pregnancy through guidelines for patients and for healthcare professionals.*

*The importance of oral health during pregnancy cannot be underestimated. Scientific studies have shown connections between gum disease and adverse pregnancy outcomes such as premature birth, low birth weight, and pre-eclampsia.*

*The Oral Health and Pregnancy project offers the site [oralhealthandpregnancy.efp.org](http://oralhealthandpregnancy.efp.org) which is full of advice – based on the latest scientific evidence – about the steps that need to be taken to ensure good oral health in pregnant women. The portal includes written, graphical, and video material in three areas:*

- *The importance of women's oral health during pregnancy;*
- *The links between periodontal diseases and pregnancy;*
- *Preventing and treating periodontal disease during pregnancy.*

*At the heart of the Oral Health and Pregnancy portal are sets of guidelines about oral health in pregnant women for dentists, dental hygienists, other health professionals, and for women themselves. These guidelines have been drawn up by some of the world's leading experts in periodontal science and are based on the results of numerous scientific studies.*

*The project will also provide a toolkit for the 30 national societies of periodontology which are members of the EFP to enable them to run their own campaigns on oral health and pregnancy, whether through similar portals or through the production and distribution of leaflets based on the guidelines. This toolkit will enable the important information contained in the guidelines to reach health professionals and women across Europe in local languages and adapted to local needs.*

[oralhealthandpregnancy.efp.org](http://oralhealthandpregnancy.efp.org)



## A joint EFP - Oral-B project

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*The European Federation of Periodontology (EFP) is the leading global voice on gum health and gum disease and the driving force behind EuroPerio – the most important international periodontal congress – and Perio Workshop, a world-leading meeting on periodontal science. The EFP also edits the Journal of Clinical Periodontology, one of the most authoritative scientific publications in this field.*

*The EFP comprises 30 national societies of periodontology in Europe, northern Africa, Caucasia, and the Middle East, which together represent about 14,000 periodontists, dentists, researchers, and other members of the dental team focused on improving periodontal science and practice.*

[www.efp.org](http://www.efp.org)

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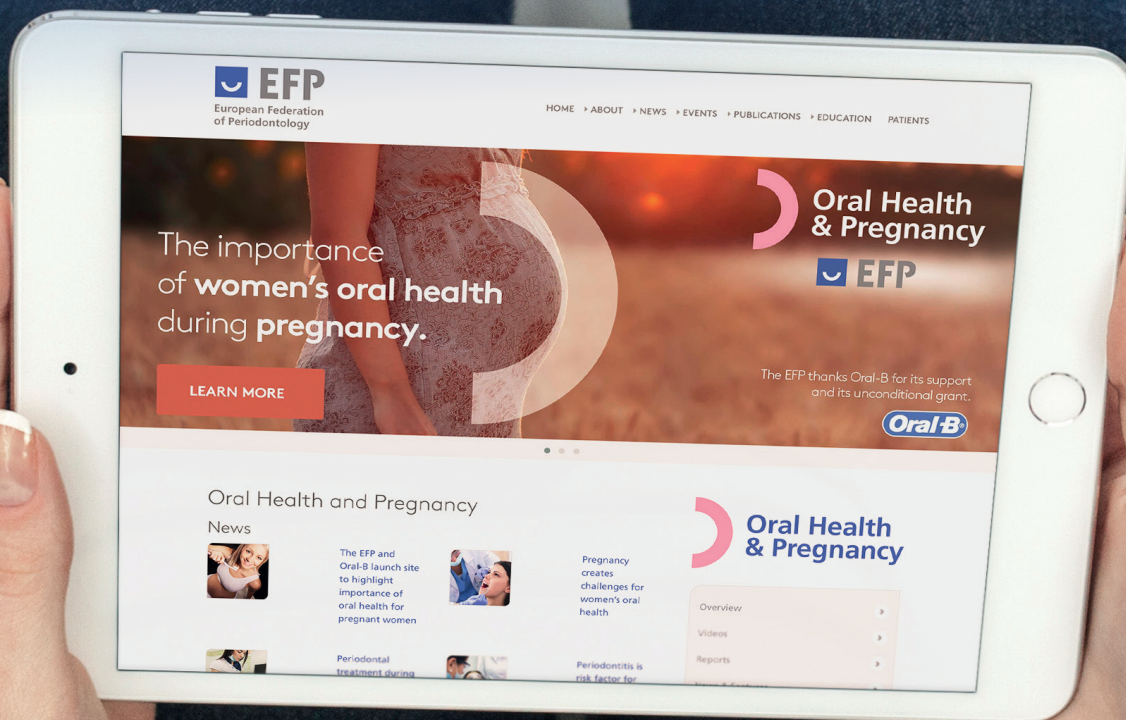
*Oral-B is the worldwide leader in the over \$5 billion tooth-brush market. Part of the Procter & Gamble Company, the brand includes manual and electric toothbrushes for children and adults, oral irrigators, interdental products such as dental floss, together with toothpastes and mouth rinses. Oral-B manual toothbrushes are used by more dentists than any other brand in the USA and many international markets.*

*Oral B has been an EFP partner since 2009 and has participated in many EFP events, including EuroPerio7 (2012) and EuroPerio8 (2015) as a Diamond sponsor, the EFP Postgraduate Symposium in 2013 and 2015, and the European Workshop in Periodontology in 2014. The company will be a Diamond Sponsor of EuroPerio9, which takes place in Amsterdam in June 2018.*

[www.dentalcare.com](http://www.dentalcare.com)



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during pregnancy



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The EFP thanks Oral-B for its support and its unrestricted grant.

