

# Preventive Dental Visits for pregnant women are important!

Good oral health helps us eat, speak, smile, and express feelings.

## Access to Preventive Dental Visits

Access to preventive oral health services is essential for pregnant women to have the best possible oral health and overall health.<sup>1</sup>

It is important for women and health professionals to know that oral health services are safe and are an important component of a healthy pregnancy.<sup>2</sup>



Less than half of pregnant women have a teeth cleaning during pregnancy, a service that promotes good oral health.<sup>3</sup>

**46%**

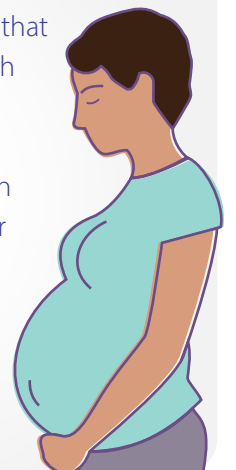
Pregnant women who had teeth cleaned

**54%**

Pregnant women who did not have teeth cleaned

Lack of perceived need and financial barriers are the primary reasons that women do not access oral health services during pregnancy.<sup>4</sup>

In many states, pregnant women with low incomes are eligible for Medicaid dental coverage and have access to oral health care that they don't have during other periods of their lives.<sup>5</sup>



# Benefits of Preventive Dental Visits

During pregnancy, women's bodies change in many ways, and some of these changes can cause oral health problems.<sup>2</sup> For example, pregnant women's gums may swell and bleed (pregnancy gingivitis) more frequently than nonpregnant women's. If untreated, the condition may progress to periodontitis (gum disease).

Pregnancy is a teachable moment when women are motivated to adopt healthy behaviors.<sup>6</sup>



Oral health services, including counseling about good oral health behaviors, can improve maternal oral health and may reduce the transmission of cavity-causing bacteria from mothers to young children, which can delay or prevent tooth decay in children.<sup>2</sup>

## References

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2. Oral Health During Pregnancy: A National Consensus Statement
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