

# Key Oral Health Messages for Pregnant Women and their children

## Key Messages

## Why Is This Important?

### *Cavities*

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| 1. Cavities are caused by germs. | Children and adults get cavities because of germs in the mouth that they can spread to each other. |
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### *Baby Teeth Are Important*

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| 2. Care of baby teeth can affect permanent teeth. | Taking good care of baby teeth can help grown-up teeth look and work better. |
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### *Lift the Lip*

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| 3. Parents need to look at their children's teeth once a month to check for spots or problems. | It is important for an adult family member to check a child's teeth and gums once a month for spots or problems. |
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### *Take Your Child to the Dentist*

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| 4. Children should see a dentist by age 1.                                     | Children should see a dentist when their 1 <sup>st</sup> tooth erupts or by age 1.  |
| 5. Dental disease can be asymptomatic.   | Children may have cavities even if their teeth don't hurt.  |
| 6. Going to the dentist regularly is important even if my child seems healthy. | Children should see a dentist regularly even if they do not complain about their teeth or have any problems chewing and eating. |

### *Protect Your Child's Teeth with Fluoride*

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| 7. Fluoride makes teeth stronger.                   | Giving your child fluoride through using fluoridated toothpaste or drinking tap water is important to strengthen your child's teeth. |
| 8. It is important to use toothpaste with fluoride. |  |

### *Brush Daily*

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| 9. Babies should have their gums cleaned/wiped/brushed as soon as teeth erupt.   | It is important to clean a baby's teeth and gums after every feeding |
| 10. Brush your child's teeth twice a day.  |  |
| 11. Clean your child's teeth before bed.   |  |
| Brush your child's teeth twice a day, especially at bedtime. The last thing that should touch a child's mouth before going to bed is a toothbrush and toothpaste (or a washcloth for babies who don't have teeth yet). |  |

### *Limit Sweets*

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| 12. Limit sugary snacks and drinks | Sugary snacks and drinks can hurt children's teeth and their health. |
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### *No Bottles or Sippy Cups in Bed*

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| 13. Children should not go to bed with a sippy cup or bottle with anything in it but water. | Going to bed with a sippy cup or bottle with anything in it but water can hurt a child's teeth. |
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### *Wean from Bottle by One Year*

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| 14. Children should be weaned from the bottle by one year. | It's best for children to stop drinking from a bottle by the time they turn one year old. |
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### *Don't Share Germs*

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| 15. Families should not share utensils, toothbrushes, etc. | It is important that children never put anything in their mouths that has just been in someone else's mouth. |
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### *Help Children Brush Up to Age 6*

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| 16. Children need help brushing until they are at least 6 years old. | As soon as they can hold a toothbrush, children are able to brush their teeth by themselves. |
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### *Take Care of Your Own Teeth*

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| 17. My own oral health can affect the health of my child's teeth. | Keeping my own teeth clean will help the children I care for to have healthy teeth.  |
| 18. Perinatal Oral Health is essential                            | Mom's can infect their babies with the germs that cause tooth decay before the baby's teeth erupt. Dental care is safe for pregnant women. |