

Key Oral Health Messages for Pregnant Women and their children

Key Messages	Why Is This Important?
<i>Cavities</i>	
1. Cavities are caused by germs.	Children and adults get cavities because of germs in the mouth that they can spread to each other.
<i>Baby Teeth Are Important</i>	
2. Care of baby teeth can affect permanent teeth.	Taking good care of baby teeth can help grown-up teeth look and work better.
<i>Lift the Lip</i>	
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.
<i>Take Your Child to the Dentist</i>	
4. Children should see a dentist by age 1.	Children should see a dentist when their 1 st 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.
<i>Protect Your Child's Teeth with Fluoride</i>	
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.	
<i>Brush Daily</i>	
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.	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).
11. Clean your child's teeth before bed.	
<i>Limit Sweets</i>	
12. Limit sugary snacks and drinks	Sugary snacks and drinks can hurt children's teeth and their health.
<i>No Bottles or Sippy Cups in Bed</i>	
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.
<i>Wean from Bottle by One Year</i>	
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.
<i>Don't Share Germs</i>	
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.
<i>Help Children Brush Up to Age 6</i>	
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.
<i>Take Care of Your Own Teeth</i>	
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.