# Perinatal Oral Health Care

**Get Oral Health Care**

* Taking care of your mouth while pregnant is important for you and your baby. Schedule a dental appointment to have your oral health needs evaluated by the dental team.
* Changes to your body when you are pregnant can make your gums sore or puffy and can make them bleed. This is called *gingivitis* and if not treated, can lead to more serious periodontal (gum) disease and even tooth loss.
* Oral health care, including X-rays, pain medication, and local anesthesia, is safe throughout pregnancy.

# Tips for Practicing Good Oral Hygiene

* Brush your teeth with fluoridated toothpaste twice a day and clean between teeth daily with floss. Replace your toothbrush every 3 or 4 months, or more often if the bristles are frayed. Do not share your toothbrush.
* Rinse every night before bed with an over-the-counter fluoridated, alcohol-free mouth rinse.
* After eating, chew xylitol-containing gum or use other xylitol-containing products, such as mints, which can help reduce bacteria that cause tooth decay.

# o Consume Xylitol gum or mints 5 times a day, this is around 10 grams total. Consumption of large quantities of Xylitol (30-40 grams) can cause stomach upset

* If you vomit from pregnancy-related nausea, rinse your mouth with a teaspoon of baking soda in a cup of water to stop acid from attacking your teeth.

# Eat Healthy Foods

* Eat a healthy variety of foods, such as fruits; vegetables; whole-grain products; and dairy products.
* Eat fewer foods high in sugar like candy, cookies, cake, and dried fruit, and fewer beverages high in sugar like juice, fruit-flavored drinks, or pop (soda).
* Drink water or milk instead of juice, fruit-flavored drinks, or pop (soda).
* Drink water throughout the day, especially between eating. Drink fluoridated water (via a community fluoridated water source) or bottled water that contains fluoride.

# Practice Other Healthy Behaviors

* Stop any use of tobacco products and recreational drugs. Avoid secondhand smoke.
* Stop any consumption of alcoholic beverages

# After Your Baby is Born

* Continue taking care of your mouth after your baby is born. Keep getting oral health care, practicing good oral hygiene, eating healthy foods, and practicing other healthy behaviors.
* Take care of your baby’s gums and teeth, feed your baby healthy foods, and take your baby to the dentist by age 1.

Adapted from *Oral Health Care During Pregnancy: A National Consensus Statement- Summary of an Expert Workgroup Meeting*, 2012 by the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center, Georgetown University.