

Oral Health Checklist for Prenatal Providers

You are often the “first line” in assessing pregnant women’s oral health. You can help identify problems, provide referrals to dentists, and reinforce good oral health practices.

Below are tips for discussing oral health with pregnant women during prenatal visits.

ASK

Assess Pregnant Women’s Oral Health Status

Questions to ask during the initial prenatal visit:

- When was your last dental visit?** *If it has been more than six months, she needs to schedule an appointment.*
- Do you need help finding a dentist?** *Recommend dentists in your area, or refer her to 2-1-1.*
- Do you have any questions or concerns about getting oral health care while you are pregnant?** *Reassure her that dental care is safe, important, and recommended for pregnant women.*
- Do you have any dental problems or concerns, including:**
 - gums that bleed when you brush
 - toothache (pain)
 - trouble chewing food
 - vomiting (morning sickness)

For any “yes” answers, refer to Oral Health Care During Pregnancy: Practice Guidance for Texas Prenatal and Dental Providers for information, and tell her to see her dentist.

ADVISE

Counsel Pregnant Women About Oral Health

- Pregnant women should brush their teeth twice a day and floss once a day.
- Dental care, including x-rays and local anesthetic, is safe.
- Moms and other caregivers can pass cavity-causing bacteria to children from their own mouth. Avoid saliva-sharing activities. Don’t share utensils with a child or clean a child’s pacifier in your mouth.

REFER

Provide Medical Clearance for Pregnant Women to See a Dentist

- Refer your patient to a dentist if she has not seen a dentist in the past 6 months.
- Complete referral/clearance form with relevant medical information and send to woman’s dentist.
- Document findings in the woman’s medical chart.

Dental Provider Checklist for Treating Pregnant Women

Good oral health is important for a healthy pregnancy. Dentists can help improve the oral health of pregnant women and their children. Along with standard care procedures, below is more guidance for treating pregnant women.

ASK

Assess Pregnant Women's Oral Health

- Do you have any questions or concerns about getting dental care while you are pregnant?** *Reassure her dental care is safe, important, and recommended during pregnancy.*
- Have there been any changes in your diet?** *Pregnant women may be snacking more on sugary foods and drinks. Remind her how poor diet can affect her teeth and make healthy suggestions.*
- Since becoming pregnant, have you been vomiting?** *Advise her not to brush immediately after vomiting and to rinse her mouth with a teaspoon of baking soda dissolved in a cup of water to neutralize the acid.*
- Have you received prenatal care?** *If no, tell her prenatal care is important and to call 2-1-1 for help finding a provider.*

DO

Provide Dental Care to Pregnant Women

- Perform a comprehensive oral exam. Take x-rays to diagnose oral diseases, as needed.
- Provide emergency and routine dental care at any time during pregnancy.

ADVISE

Counsel Pregnant Women About Oral Health

- Assure pregnant women dental care is safe, including x-rays and local anesthetic.
- Pregnant women should brush their teeth twice a day and floss once a day.
- Moms and other caregivers can pass cavity-causing bacteria to children from their own mouth. Avoid saliva-sharing activities. Don't share utensils with a child or clean a child's pacifier in your mouth.
- They should take their baby for their first dental appointment before age one.

REFER

Direct Pregnant Women to Prenatal Resources

- If a pregnant patient is not receiving prenatal care, tell her to call 2-1-1 for help finding a provider.
- Complete referral form with dental treatment information and send to woman's prenatal provider.