

dental clinic > Richard Kabanda

Dental advice for pregnancy

Dear Dentist, I used to have regular cleaning of teeth twice a year, now that I am pregnant, is it safe? Which dental treatments should I avoid?

Mariam, Ndejje

Dear Miriam: Many people think it is forbidden for a pregnant woman to seek dental care, this is completely wrong. To women who have just found out that they are expecting, consulting their dentists is probably the last thing on their mind.

There is good reason, however, to be concerned about your dental care while pregnant. Your teeth and gums can be affected by your pregnancy, and your oral health can have an effect on the health of your developing child. There is a lot you need to know during this time and here is some key information.

Pregnancy and Gum Disease

The hormonal changes caused by pregnancy can change the way your gums react to dental plaque, causing them to become irritated, inflammation. Studies have shown that pregnancy can increase the amount of bacteria present in your mouth, so maintaining a regimen of brushing and flossing while pregnant is exceptionally important.

Morning Sickness and Oral Care

If you suffer from morning sickness, brushing your teeth can seem like a nearly impossible task, since the mere smell of the toothpaste can cause a reaction. If possible, try different, milder flavours of toothpaste to see if it is possible to find one that you can tolerate. At the very least, brush using water and baking soda rather than avoiding the toothbrush altogether.

An even more serious threat to your teeth is the acid that enters your mouth from each epi-



Smoking a pipe or chewing tobacco can increase cancer risk. NET PHOTO.

sode of morning sickness. If left unchecked, it can erode the enamel of your teeth and lead to tooth decay. Rinsing your mouth out with water can remove and neutralize much of the acid, while brushing your teeth afterward should help remove the rest.

Dental Care while Pregnant

During the first and third trimesters of your pregnancy, you should avoid having teeth extractions as a precautionary measure. Dental work done during the second trimester of pregnancy has been shown to be safe for both the mother and the child.

Cleaning of your teeth from a dental office and filling of cavities with dental cement are treatments that can be provided at any time of your pregnancy, unless if one has difficulties opening her mouth. It is always good not to perform many treatments at a time during this period.

Dental X-rays, on the other hand, should be avoided throughout your entire pregnancy.

The writer is a dentist
krdent@yahoo.com