Guidelines for Oral Health Care in Pregnancy

- Dental care is safe and essential during pregnancy
- Pregnancy is not a reason to defer routine dental care or treatment
- Diagnostic measures, including needed dental x-rays, can be undertaken safely
- Scaling and root planing to control periodontal disease can be undertaken safely; avoid using metronidazole in the first trimester
- Treatment for acute infection or sources of sepsis should be provided at any stage of pregnancy. A number of antibiotics are safe for use
- Treatment, including root-canal therapy and tooth extraction, can be undertaken safely
- Needed diagnosis, preventive care, and treatment can be provided throughout pregnancy; if in doubt, coordinate with the woman’s prenatal medical provider
- Emergency care should be provided at any time during pregnancy
- Delay in necessary treatment could cause unforeseen harm to the mother and possibly to the fetus
- For many women, treatment of oral disease during pregnancy is particularly important because health and dental health insurance may be available only during pregnancy or up to two months post-partum

Medical Conditions and Dental Treatment Considerations

Hypertensive Disorders and Pregnancy
Hypertensive disorders, including chronic or preexisting hypertension and the development of hypertension during pregnancy, occur in 12–22% of pregnant women. Oral health professionals should be aware of hypertensive disorders because of increased risk of bleeding during procedures. Consult with the woman’s prenatal care provider before initiating dental procedures in women with uncontrolled severe hypertension (blood pressure values greater than or equal to 160/110 mm Hg).

Diabetes and Pregnancy
Gestational diabetes occurs in 2–5% of pregnant women in the U.S. It is usually diagnosed after 24 weeks of gestation. Any inflammation process, including acute and chronic periodontal infection, can make diabetes control more difficult. Poorly controlled diabetes is associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes such as preeclampsia, congenital anomalies, and large-for-gestational age newborns. Meticulous control to avoid or minimize dental infection is important for pregnant women with diabetes. Controlling all sources of acute or chronic inflammation helps control diabetes.

Heparin and Pregnancy
A small number of pregnant women with the diagnosis of thrombophilia (a blood disorder) may be receiving daily injections of heparin to improve pregnancy outcome. Heparin increases the risk for bleeding complications during dental procedures. Dental providers should consult with the woman’s prenatal medical provider prior to dental treatment.

Risk of Aspiration and Positioning During Pregnancy
Pregnant women have delayed gastric emptying and are considered to always have a “full stomach.” Thus, they are at increased risk for aspiration. Maintaining a semi-seated position or positioning with a pillow helps avoid nausea or aspiration and can make the woman feel more comfortable.
### Guidelines for Treatment in Pregnancy

<table>
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<th>Indications</th>
<th>Radiographs</th>
<th>Analgesics (with FDA category)</th>
<th>Local Anesthetic (with FDA category)</th>
<th>Amalgam placement or removal</th>
<th>Nitrous Oxide</th>
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<th>Antibiotics &amp; Anti-Infectives (with FDA category)</th>
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<tr>
<td>anytime during pregnancy</td>
<td>Diagnostic x-rays are safe during pregnancy</td>
<td>Acetaminophen (B)</td>
<td>Lidoacaine with epinephrine (2%) (B), considered safe during pregnancy</td>
<td>No evidence that the type of mercury released from existing fillings harms the fetus</td>
<td>30% nitrous oxide can be used when topical or local anesthetics are inadequate</td>
<td>Penicillin (B) Amoxicillin (B) Cephalosporins (B) Clindamycin (B) Erythromycin not in estolate form (B) Quinolones (C) Clarithromycin (C) As prophylaxis for dental surgery: use same criteria for all people at risk for bacteremia</td>
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**1st Trimester (1-13 weeks)**
Spontaneous pregnancy loss occurs in 10-15% of all clinically-recognized pregnancies in the first trimester. Most losses are due to chromosome abnormalities. Yet, women may prefer to wait until the second trimester (14th week) for dental care.

**2nd Trimester (14-27 weeks)**

**3rd Trimester (28-40 weeks)**

NEVER USE Ibuprofen or Indomethacin

AVOID: Metronidazole (B)

**NEVER & CAUTIONS**

NEVER USE Aspirin unless prescribed by the prenatal care provider

Caution: Consult with prenatal care provider before recommending Ibuprofen (B) or Naprosyn (B) during the 1st and 2nd trimesters

NEVER USE Tetracycline (D) Erythromycin in estolate form

### Citations

- ACOG GUIDELINES FOR DENTAL CARE IN PREGNANCY: Caries, poor dentition, and periodontal disease may be associated with an increased risk for preterm delivery. It is very important that pregnant women continue usual dental care in pregnancy. This dental care includes routine brushing and flossing, scheduled cleanings, and any medically needed dental work. Many dentists will require a note from the obstetrician stating that dental care requiring local anesthesia, antibiotics, or narcotic analgesia is not contraindicated in pregnancy. The dentist should be aware that pregnant women’s gums do bleed more easily. Found in Guidelines for Perinatal Care, Sixth Edition, pp 123-124; http://www.acog.org/publications/guidelinesForPerinatalCare/gpc-83.pdf Copyright October 2007 by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.
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