Oral Health Care During Pregnancy

Prepared by
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Research to Policy and Practice Forum: Periodontal Health and Birth Outcomes—Summary of a Meeting of Maternal, Child, and Oral Health Experts

- Presents an overview of a 2006 forum convened by HRSA’s Maternal and Child Health Bureau.
- Explores oral health requirements of pregnant women as a promising strategy for improving maternal and infant health.
Research to Policy and Practice Forum: Periodontal Health and Birth Outcomes—Summary of a Meeting of Maternal, Child, and Oral Health Experts

- Provides a summary of presentations, including
  - Evidence related to periodontal health and birth outcomes.
  - Policies, programs, and practices addressing the oral health needs of pregnant women.
  - New findings from federally funded clinical research.
  - Overview of periodontal health for women of reproductive age.

- Offers future directions for policy and programming, including
  - Overarching themes (e.g., pregnancy is an opportune time to promote healthy behaviors).
  - Health education and training themes (e.g., education and training should be targeted to a wide range of professionals).
  - Outreach and public education themes (e.g., identify consistent oral health messages).
Research to Policy and Practice Forum: Periodontal Health and Birth Outcomes—Summary of a Meeting of Maternal, Child, and Oral Health Experts

- Offers future directions for policy and programming, including (continued)
- Policies and program themes (e.g., oral health promotion efforts should include all population groups).
- Work force development themes (e.g., train non-oral-health professionals).
- Access-to-care themes (e.g., identify more dentists willing to serve pregnant women).

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- Offers future directions for research, for example
- Determine what populations with periodontal disease are at highest risk for adverse birth outcomes.
- Develop a quick, reliable method for screening pregnant women for periodontal disease.
Pregnancy and Oral Health Workgroup

- Health Resources and Services Administrations’ Maternal and Child Health Bureau (chair)
- Health Resources and Services Administrations’ Office of Women Health
- Altarum Institute
- American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- American Dental Association
- American Dental Education Association
- Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
- Children’s Dental Health Project
- National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center
- National Oral Health Policy Center
- University of California at Los Angeles Dental Policy Center

Pregnancy and Oral Health Workgroup
Short Term Strategies

- Conduct environmental scan of materials for health professionals and consumers.
- Develop a policy brief to address the major barriers to addressing women’s oral health needs during the perinatal period.
- Develop a consumer brochure to educate women about the importance of oral hygiene and oral health care during pregnancy.
Access to Oral Health Care During the Perinatal Period: A Policy Brief

- Explains major barriers to addressing perinatal oral health.
- Discusses the interconnectedness of oral health and systemic health.
- Explains pregnant women’s elevated risk for oral infections.
- Identifies the need to increase the proportion of women who receive oral health care during the perinatal period.
- Offers strategies for reducing systems-level barriers to accessing oral health care.

Access to Oral Health Care During the Perinatal Period: A Policy Brief

- Includes strategies to
  - Promote the use of guidelines
  - Expand opportunities for professional and consumer education
  - Increase dental insurance coverage, and
  - Integrate oral health care as a part of perinatal care.
- Presents evidence from the professional, peer-reviewed literature.
Oral Health Care During Pregnancy
A Summary of Practice Guidelines

- Intended to improve the standard of care for pregnant women.
- Explains why oral health care during pregnancy is important.

Oral Health Care During Pregnancy
A Summary of Practice Guidelines

- Provides information for all health professionals, prenatal care professionals, and oral health professionals.
- Offers guidance to share with families during pregnancy and postpartum.
Oral Health Care During Pregnancy
A Summary of Practice Guidelines

- Role of all health professionals:
  - Explains why oral health care during pregnancy is important.
  - Explains that oral health care during pregnancy is safe and effective.
  - Tells women that diagnosis (including necessary dental X-rays) and treatment for conditions requiring immediate attention are safe during the first trimester of pregnancy.

- Role of all health professionals (continued):
  - Provide information about oral hygiene and oral health care by including topics in prenatal classes.
  - Provide a list of dentists in the community.
  - Provide referrals as needed.
Oral Health Care During Pregnancy
A Summary of Practice Guidelines

Role of prenatal health professionals:
- Assess pregnant women’s oral health status.
- Integrate oral health topics into prenatal care classes, and encourage women to attend classes.
- Make available educational materials that are written at appropriate reading levels.
- Counsel women to adhere to their dentist’s recommendations for treatment or follow-up.

Role of oral health professionals:
- Improve access to oral health services (e.g., long waits for available appointment dates).
- Conduct a health history, risk assessment, and oral examination.
- Use when clinically indicated: X-rays, local anesthetic with epinephrine, appropriate analgesics and/or antibiotics, and dental amalgam.
- Assist pregnant women with disease management.
Oral Health Care During Pregnancy
A Summary of Practice Guidelines

Offers guidance to share with families (during pregnancy), for example:

- Brush teeth with fluoridated toothpaste twice a day, and floss once a day.
- Limit foods containing sugar to mealtimes only.
- Drink water or milk. Avoid carbonated beverages (pop or soda).
- Obtain necessary oral treatment before delivery.

Oral Health Care During Pregnancy
A Summary of Practice Guidelines

Offers guidance to share with families (postpartum), for example:

- Brush teeth with fluoridated toothpaste twice a day, and floss once a day.
- Limit foods containing sugar to mealtimes only.
- Drink water or milk. Avoid carbonated beverages (pop or soda).
- Obtain necessary oral treatment before delivery.
Two Healthy Smiles
Tips to Keep You and Your Baby Healthy

- Designed to educate women about the importance of proper oral hygiene and oral health care during pregnancy.
- Topics include brushing, flossing, eating healthy foods, and getting dental care.
- Additional topics include caring for an infant’s gums and teeth, and finding a dentist.
- Easy-to-read format that is appropriate for readers with lower literacy levels.

www.mchoralhealth.org/materials/perinatal.html
Pregnancy and Oral Health Workgroup
Long Term Strategies

- Promote guidelines and other materials
- Expand education of health professionals
- Integrate perinatal health and oral health (education, referral, and follow-up as part of routine perinatal care)
- Educate women and their families
- Improve financing of perinatal oral health care