



# Promoting Oral Health During Pregnancy

UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES

May 2018

Since the release of the landmark publication *Oral Health Care During Pregnancy: A National Consensus Statement* in 2012, federal agencies and national, state, and local organizations have continued to launch programs, advance policy, produce resources, and provide education and training to ensure that health professionals and pregnant women are aware of the importance and safety of receiving oral health care during pregnancy. The ultimate goal of these efforts is to improve oral health for pregnant women and their children. This document is the seventh in a series of updates to highlight activities to promote oral health during pregnancy. Past issues of *Promoting Oral Health During Pregnancy: Update on Activities* are available [online](#).



## Programs and Policy

Below is a summary of articles focusing on issues related to oral health during pregnancy that have been recently published in peer-reviewed journals.

- Adams SH, Gregorich SE, Rising SS, Hutchison M, Chung LH. 2017. Integrating a nurse-midwife-led oral health intervention into CenteringPregnancy prenatal care: Results of a pilot study. *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health* 62(4):436–469.

This article describes a study that investigated whether women receiving CenteringPregnancy Oral Health Promotion, skills-based educational prenatal care modules on maternal and child oral health, had clinically improved oral health compared to women receiving standard care through CenteringPregnancy, a prenatal care module. The analysis focused on the maternal module that included facilitated discussions and skills-building activities, including proper toothbrushing. Significant post-intervention

improvements were noted in the intervention group compared to the control group in the following areas: plaque index, bleeding on probing, and gingival pocket depths 4 mm or greater. The authors conclude that providing oral-health-education and skills-building activities within prenatal care may be effective in improving women's oral health during pregnancy.

- Byrd MG, Quinonez RB, Rozier RG, Phillips C, Megegan M, Martinez L, Divaris K. 2018. Prenatal oral health counseling by primary care physicians: Results of a national survey. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*. [Epub ahead of print]

This article describes a study that investigated characteristics of primary care physicians (PCPs) who provide oral health counseling to pregnant women. The authors found that a sizeable proportion of PCPs provided oral health counseling. While the vast majority agreed that preventive oral health care is very important, a large proportion had not received oral health training, highlighting a disconnect between prenatal oral health practice guidelines and the preparedness of the PCP work force to address oral-health-related issues. Receipt of continuing education courses and perceived preparedness were strongly and positively associated with providing oral health counseling to pregnant women. The authors conclude that PCP attributes, including education and preparedness, appear to be promising targets for interventions aimed at enhancing pregnant women's oral health status and improving the quality of the oral health care they receive.

- Iida H. 2017. Oral health interventions during pregnancy. *Dental Clinics of North America* 61(3):467–481.

This article reviews knowledge and practice related to oral health interventions during pregnancy, with separate focuses on individual- and population-based strategies for improving the oral health of pregnant women and their children. Topics include management and control of dental caries, management of periodontal health, systems-level interventions, and mechanisms for financing oral health care. Recommendations are included.



- Leone SM, Quinonez RB, Chuang A, Begue A, Kerns A, Jackson J, Phillips C. 2017. Introduction of prenatal oral health into medical students' obstetrics training. *Journal of Dental Education* 81(12):1405–1412.

This article describes a study that examined the influence of the Prenatal Oral Health Program (pOHP) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on medical students' oral-health-related knowledge, confidence, attitudes, and referral practices. The study sought to determine whether participation in the pOHP affected students' ability to screen, counsel, and refer pregnant women to a dental clinic and their knowledge about the safety of oral health treatment during pregnancy. Results showed that participation in the pOHP (intervention group) positively and significantly influenced students on all clinical constructs except their knowledge about the safety of oral health treatment during pregnancy. The authors conclude that using a multi-method approach to train medical students about prenatal oral health can effectively promote interdisciplinary coordinated care, meet interprofessional-education accreditation standards, and aid in implementing practice guidelines in medical school curricula.

- Stohl HE, Chen A, 2017. Oral health coverage options for pregnant adults and adolescents. *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 22(1):24–31.

This article discusses the importance of comprehensive oral health coverage for pregnant adults and pregnant adolescents under various types of health insurance coverage. The article provides background about the importance and safety of oral health care during pregnancy and about oral health coverage for pregnant women with low incomes. It presents information about coverage for both pregnant adults and pregnant adolescents through Medicaid; the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); and Medicaid expansion, health insurance marketplaces, and basic health programs, all of which fall under the Affordable Care Act. The authors conclude that Medicaid, CHIP, health insurance marketplaces, and basic health programs offer options for oral health coverage for many pregnant women. They state that while the different coverage options may leave some gaps in services offered, they hope that with increased awareness of options for oral health coverage will come increased access to oral health care for pregnant women.





## Resources

### Colorado

- *Keeping Your Child's Mouth Healthy*  
This brochure for parents provides information about how to keep infants' and young children's mouths healthy. Topics include why baby (primary) teeth are important, how to keep an infant's mouth healthy before teeth start to come in, and how to care for infants' and children's teeth. Information about fluoride is also included. This brochure is available in Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, English, Nepali, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Non-English versions are available online. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The brochure was produced by Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

- Vander Schaff EB, Quinonez RB, Cornett AC, Randolph GD, Boggess K, Flower KB. 2018. A pilot quality improvement collaborative to improve safety net dental access for pregnant women and young children. *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 22(2):255–263.

This article presents information on the acceptability and feasibility of conducting a quality improvement (QI) learning collaborative (LC) in safety net dental practices. The article also presents results of a pilot evaluation of the LC's effects on the practices' financial stability, access, efficiency, and care for pregnant women and infants and young children from birth through age 5. Five safety net dental practices participated in a 15-month LC utilizing business assessments, QI training, prenatal oral health training, and early childhood oral health training. Practices collected monthly data on net revenue, no-show rates, number of encounters for pregnant women, and number of encounters for young children. Results varied by practice. Participants reported that the LC improved access for pregnant women and young children and that QI methods were often new and difficult. The authors conclude that participation by safety net dental practices in a QI LC is feasible and acceptable and that future efforts should focus on the specific needs of individual practices and on offering practices additional QI training.

- *Keeping Your Teeth Healthy During Pregnancy*  
This brochure for pregnant women provides information about how to keep their own and their infant's mouths healthy. It also addresses why teeth are important during pregnancy and the safety of receiving oral health care during pregnancy. This brochure is available in Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, English, Nepali, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Non-English versions are available online. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The brochure was produced by Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

### Connecticut

- *Connecticut's Perinatal and Infant Oral Health Quality Improvement Project: Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System Data for Evaluation*  
This report describes the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) and how PRAMS data can be used for evaluating the Perinatal and Infant Oral Health Quality Improvement project in Connecticut. Topics include PRAMS, births, and maternal oral health and health care in Connecticut. Contents include PRAMS questions on maternal oral health, oral health care for mothers by health insurance status, and implications and alternatives for project evaluation. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The report was produced by Connecticut Voices for Children.

- *Dental Care for You and Your Baby*

This flyer offers tips for how to keep the mouth healthy during pregnancy and explains why doing so is important for both pregnant women and their infant. It also includes tips for taking care of infants' and children's mouths, contact information for help



finding a dentist in Connecticut, and illustrated instructions for how to use dental floss. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The flyer was produced by Connecticut Dental Health Partnership.

- *Perinatal and Infant Oral Health Quality Improvement Project: Monitoring the HUSKY Program's Capacity for Caring for Pregnant Women and Infants*

This report presents findings from a study to determine the impact of the Perinatal Infant and Oral Health Quality Improvement (PIOHQI) project on access to care for pregnant women and infants in Connecticut's HUSKY Program. Contents include an overview of PIOHQI and information about the study methods, including subjects, instruments, data, analytical approach, and limitations. Tables provide information on the project-implementation schedule; survey respondents; changes in health care use among pregnant women, new mothers, and infants; and changes in health professional practice. The survey instrument is included. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The report was produced by Connecticut Voices for Children.



- *Pregnant? Is Your Child Age One? Are You on HUSKY Health?*

This poster informs women that they need to visit the dentist during pregnancy and take their child to the dentist by the time the child is age 1. The poster is written in simple language with text in English on one side and in Spanish on the other. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The poster was produced by Connecticut Dental Health Partnership.

## Maine

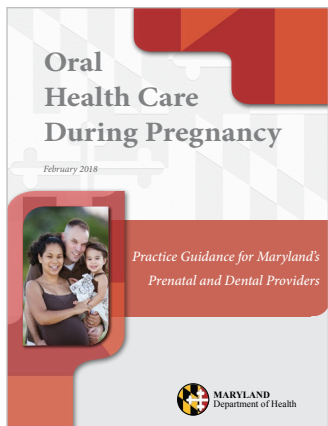
- *Dental Care During Pregnancy*

This brochure for pregnant women provides information about caring for their own and their infant's oral health. The brochure explains why it is safe and important to get oral health care during pregnancy and offers tips on how to care for an infant's teeth. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The brochure was produced by MaineHealth.

- *The Importance of Oral Health Care During Pregnancy*  
This document for health professionals provides information about the importance and safety of oral health during pregnancy and survey results from the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) in Maine. Statistics are provided for the percentage of women who did not receive education about oral hygiene while pregnant and who did not have their teeth cleaned while pregnant. Also included is information about ways that Before the First Tooth, Maine's Perinatal Infant and Oral Health Quality Improvement project, can help practices adopt best practice approaches to integrating oral health into prenatal care. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The brochure was produced by MaineHealth.
- *Oral Health During Pregnancy*  
This infographic summarizes results of a survey focusing on oral health during pregnancy administered to oral health professionals in Maine in 2016. It provides information about the percentage of respondents who agreed that women should receive preventive oral health care and that it is safe to take X-rays during pregnancy. The infographic also provides information on the percentage of respondents who use the prenatal visit to provide anticipatory guidance about oral health care to pregnant women and who believe there are restrictions on providing oral health treatment to pregnant women. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The infographic was produced by MaineHealth.
- *Perinatal Oral Health Assessment*  
This document provides information for health professionals about how to administer a perinatal oral health assessment for pregnant women during the initial appointment. Topics include oral health questions to ask pregnant women, advising pregnant women about oral health care, and insurance status. The document also provides signs to determine whether pregnant women have dental caries and/or dental abscess. Photographs showing healthy teeth and mouths with problems such as tooth erosion, dental caries, a pregnancy tumor, pregnancy gingivitis, and periodontitis are included. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The document was produced by MaineHealth.
- *Pregnancy and Dental Health: What You Need to Know*  
This postcard provides information for pregnant women on oral health during pregnancy. Topics include cavities, morning sickness, changes in the mouth, and the importance of eating healthy foods. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The postcard was produced by MaineHealth.
- *Rx: Bring This with You to Your Next Appointment*  
This prescription referral form is designed for health professionals to complete and provide to pregnant women to share during their next dental appointment. The form provides a tool to share the woman's name, date of birth, estimated delivery date, known allergies, and indication of oral health care that is acceptable to receive and any precautions for care. It also includes space to indicate pain medications and antibiotics that are safe for the woman. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The form was produced by MaineHealth.

## Maryland

- *Give Yourself a Healthy Mouth During Pregnancy*  
This brochure for pregnant women explains why oral health care during pregnancy is important. It also provides tips on brushing, flossing, visiting the dentist, and choosing healthy foods and drinks. The brochure is available in English and Spanish. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The brochure was produced by Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Oral Health.
- *Oral Health Care During Pregnancy: Practice Guidance for Maryland's Prenatal and Dental Providers*  
This document provides guidance on oral health care during pregnancy for prenatal health professionals and oral health professionals in Maryland. The document discusses myths and facts about oral health during pregnancy and oral conditions that can affect pregnant women. A table highlighting dental pharmacological considerations for pregnant women, a referral form, tips for good oral health during infancy (available in English and Spanish), and an infographic are also included and are available in stand-alone



format. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The document was produced by Maryland Department of Health, Office of Oral Health.

- *Oral Health Tips for Pregnant Women*  
This resource for pregnant women provides information about the importance of good oral health habits during pregnancy. Contents include tips on dental visits, toothbrushing, flossing, snacking, coverage for oral health services, and how to find information about eligibility for coverage in Maryland. The resource is available in English and Spanish. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The resource was produced by Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Oral Health.
- *Setting Goals for Oral Health During Pregnancy*  
This checklist for home visitors and their clients in Maryland is designed to help them establish goals for oral health during pregnancy. Topics include making a dentist appointment, going to the dentist, brushing with fluoridated toothpaste, flossing, drinking



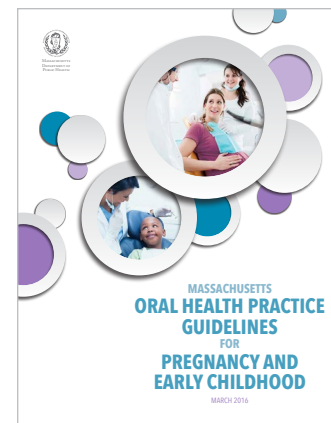
more tap water, drinking less soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages, and eating more fruits and vegetables. The checklist is available in English and Spanish. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health

Bureau] The checklist was produced by Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Oral Health.

## Massachusetts

- *Massachusetts Oral Health Practice Guidelines for Pregnancy and Early Childhood*

These guidelines provide oral health care recommendations and resources for health professionals caring for pregnant women and young children. Contents include information about oral diseases; the status of oral health among pregnant women and children in Massachusetts and national and state efforts to improve it; and the role of prenatal care health professionals, oral health professionals,



and pediatric care health professionals in improving pregnant women's and children's oral health. Topics include assessing, advising, educating, referring, collaborating, and providing treatment and management. Resources on medication use during pregnancy, sample referral forms, and reproducible handouts on healthy portion sizes and healthy eating during pregnancy are also provided. The guidelines were produced by Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Oral Health.

## Minnesota

- *Dental Care During Infancy, Early Childhood, and Pregnancy*

This handout provides information about services offered by Children's Dental Services (CDS), a program that provides preventive and restorative oral health care to families at Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and

Children (WIC) centers and other locations across Minnesota. The handout also presents reasons that oral health care during pregnancy, infancy, and early childhood is important and explains why receiving oral health care during pregnancy is safe. The types of insurance that CDS accepts are listed, and contact information is provided. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Program] The handout was produced by CDS.

## New York

- MICHHC Oral Health Manual and Toolkit**  
 This document was developed for Maternal and Infant Community Health Collaborative (MICHHC) partners, prenatal/perinatal health professionals, and oral health professionals in New York. It provides recommendations for oral health care during pregnancy, postpartum, and early childhood and guides and tools for support service providers, prenatal/perinatal health professionals, oral health professionals, and MICHHC partner programs (Head Start, WIC) to promote women’s oral health during pregnancy and children’s oral health. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The document was produced by Healthy Baby Network.

## Rhode Island

- Good Dental Health: A Partnership Between You & Me**  
 This flip book, developed for health professionals to share with parents and other caregivers, covers the basics of good oral health for infants and young children. Each page is double-sided and designed as a teaching tool. The patient-facing pages feature clear, simple text (in English and Spanish) and pictures and

TeethFirst! Flip Book Order Form

TeethFirst! Flip Book – Patient Education Tool  
Good Dental Health: A Partnership Between You & Me

Flip Book Details

- 8 1/2" x 11"
- Laminated
- Full Color
- Double Sided
- Bilingual (English/Spanish)
- Free

# of Flip Books: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY:

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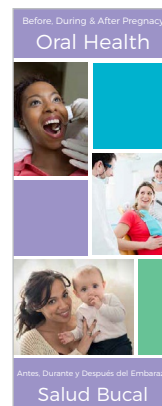
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 Mail:  
 TeethFirst!  
 c/o Rhode Island KIDS COUNT  
 One Union Station  
 Providence, RI 02903  
 Questions? Call (401) 351-1740 or  
 email us at info@teethfirst.org

illustrations to educate parents. On the back of the patient-facing pages are helpful conversation guidelines (in English) for health professionals. The flip book also includes a chart to help health professionals establish self-management goals for families to work on at home. The flip book was produced by TeethFirst!

- Healthy Teeth for You and Your Baby**  
 This brochure for pregnant women focuses on the importance and safety of oral health care during pregnancy. It also includes information about the age 1 dental visit for children and how to find a dentist. The brochure is printed in English on one side and in Spanish on the other. The brochure was produced by TeethFirst!

## South Carolina

- Before, During & After Pregnancy Oral Health**  
 This brochure for pregnant women provides information about how to take care of their mouths before and during pregnancy and their own and their infant’s mouths after the birth. Topics covered

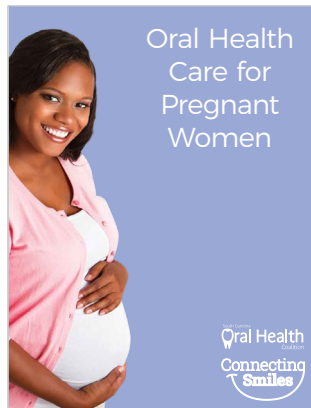


including brushing, flossing, and visiting the dentist; eating healthy foods; and nausea and vomiting. Also discussed are how and how often to clean infants’ gums or teeth, what to give infants to drink, how to avoid passing germs from a mother’s to an infant’s mouth, and getting oral health assessments and dental checkups for infants. The brochure was produced by South Carolina Oral Health Coalition.

- Keep Your Baby Cavity Free**  
 This video provides information about what new mothers need to know about how to keep their infant’s mouth healthy. The video discusses the importance of healthy eating and good oral hygiene

practices before and during pregnancy and the relationship between infant feeding practices and oral health and overall health. The video also explains why it is important to avoid putting an infant to bed with a bottle and why beverages with natural or added sugar should never be put in a bottle. The proper way to clean an infant's gums and teeth is demonstrated, and the importance of the age 1 dental visit is discussed. The video is available in English and Spanish. The video was produced by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

- *Oral Health Care for Pregnant Women*  
This document presents clinical practice guidelines for the oral health care of pregnant women in South Carolina. The document contains data on infant mortality and preterm birth, oral health care



and counseling utilization, and key findings from the South Carolina Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring Systems (PRAMS) for 2012–2013. It includes recommendations for health professionals and for oral health professionals, referral forms for oral health care, and dentists' reports for prenatal care professionals. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The document was produced by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.

- *What New Mothers Should Know*  
This video provides information about what pregnant women or women considering becoming pregnant need to know about oral health during pregnancy. The video explains the potential ramifications of oral infections and periodontal disease during pregnancy. It also discusses the way a variety of factors, such as oral hygiene and feeding practices, can affect the

bacteria in an infant's or child's mouth and thus the infant's or child's oral health. Also discussed are oral conditions that disproportionately affect pregnant women and the importance and safety of receiving oral health care during pregnancy. The video is available in English and Spanish. The video was produced by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

## Texas

- *Healthy Texas Smiles Teaser*  
This video provides information about the Healthy Texas Smiles for Moms and Babies project. The project trains home visitors on how to help pregnant women understand the importance of taking care of their mouths and of visiting the dentist regularly. The project also trains visitors on how to teach mothers to take care of their infant's mouth after birth. The video shows home visitors in various settings interacting with pregnant women and their families and providing them with oral health education in their homes. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The video was produced by Texas Department of State Health Services.

## Virginia

- *Brushing for Two: A Healthy Start for Your Baby*  
This tip sheet for pregnant women explains why oral health is important and how to maintain good oral health during pregnancy. Contents include information about oral hygiene, nutrition, and the safety of



receiving oral health care during pregnancy. The tip sheet is printed in English on one side and in Spanish on the other. The tip sheet was produced by Virginia Department of Health, Dental Health Program.

## Wisconsin

- *Earlier Is Better: Oral Health Program for Early Head Start—Final Project Report 2012–2016*

This report describes a partnership to improve oral health in pregnant women and children enrolled in Early Head Start in Wisconsin and, specifically, those enrolled in the home visiting program.



Contents include information about data collection and statistical analysis, partnership overview and processes, training for home visitors and parent educators on using the Parent Oral Health Education Toolkit (POHET), changes in oral health knowledge and behaviors for parents and other caregivers after implementation of the POHET, increases in the number of children with a dental home, and reductions in children's dental caries experience at age 3. The report was produced by Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin.



- *Results of the WDA Member Perinatal Oral Health Survey*

This article describes the Healthy Smiles for Mom and Baby project to increase the use of oral health care for pregnant women and infants in Wisconsin by integrating oral health care into the health-care-delivery system statewide. The article also presents findings from a survey of dentists about their current practice, knowledge, and interest in continuing education related to oral health care during pregnancy. Topics include dentists' opinions about the barriers that pregnant women face and strategies to increase their use of oral health services. Information about how findings will be implemented is included. [Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau] The article was produced by Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin.

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