

# A MOUTH OF HEALTH

*Expecting a baby is a joy, but it brings about many changes to your body, including your mouth.*



**WHEN WOMEN ARE** expecting, their bodies go through many changes. One area often neglected is their oral health. Here are some common oral issues that may arise during pregnancy.

#### **PREGNANCY TUMOURS**

**What is this?** Occurring most frequently during the second trimester, pregnancy tumours appear as red swellings which are actually overgrowths of tissue that develop on the gums.

**What should I do?** Although not cancerous or harmful, this can be prevented with good oral hygiene and most go away after pregnancy. However you should consult a dentist as soon as you spot them.

#### **PREGNANCY GINGIVITIS**

**What is this?** Due to changes in hormone levels, expectant mothers are more likely to develop gingivitis – an infection of the gums which causes swelling and bleeding. If left untreated, advanced gum disease can affect the supporting tissues leading to receding gums, increased tooth mobility and sensitivity.

**What should I do?** The only way to effectively prevent this is to have your teeth checked and cleaned regularly by a dentist.

## TOOTH DECAY

**What is this?** Expectant mothers have a higher risk of developing tooth decay due to frequent snacking, increased acidity in the mouth and limited attention paid to oral hygiene. This can lead to abscesses and severe oral infections.

**What should I do?** Cut down your intake of foods that are high in sugar such as biscuits, cookies, cakes, sweets and avoid beverages containing sugar. Instead, choose healthier alternatives for your snacks such as fruits, vegetables and cheese. Do also drink water instead of soft drinks.

## ENAMEL EROSION

**What is this?** When mothers suffer from morning sickness, nausea and vomiting are common and frequent side effects. The gastric acid from the stomach can cause the enamel on your teeth to erode, making teeth more sensitive and brittle.

**What should I do?** To prevent damaging your teeth, avoid brushing your teeth for at least one hour after vomiting. ○



### A PIONEER IN HEALTHCARE SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

*It is important to see a dentist who understands your dental needs during pregnancy. At Thomson Medical, we are privileged to be the healthcare partner for expectant mothers for more than 35 years. Our wealth of experience ensures you and your family receive the best possible care during this special time.*



## tips for dad

*Oral health isn't just important for mums, but for dads too. This is because baby is born with a clean mouth, hence the most common source of harmful bacteria is transmitted from the parents.*

*If fathers have active dental decay and gum diseases, they can pass decay-causing bacteria to their children through the sharing of food and utensils. This applies to other main caregivers, relatives and friends too.*

*For the sake of baby, dads should have an oral examination to detect any active diseases. If mum and dad have healthy teeth, chances are that baby's mouth will be healthy too.*



## tips for a healthy mouth:



### ADOPT GOOD ORAL HABITS

- Brush thoroughly with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss your teeth daily.
- When you have morning sickness, rinse your mouth with a teaspoon of baking soda mixed with water.
- Avoid brushing your teeth directly after vomiting as stomach acids can make your teeth 'soft'.



### GET PROFESSIONAL DENTAL CARE

*Upon learning that you are expecting, visit your dentist for a full assessment of your oral status. This should include examination of the teeth, gums, tongue, palate and soft tissues. Thereafter, visit a dentist during each trimester for professional cleaning to ensure your gums and teeth remain healthy throughout your pregnancy.*



### MAINTAIN GOOD DIETARY HABITS

*It is important during pregnancy to ensure that you have adequate nutrition with a balanced diet. Sweet food consumption should be kept in moderation, as craving for sticky or sweet foods during pregnancy can lead to increased tooth decay risk.*