

Expectant Moms Need Healthy Teeth and Gums

Did You Know?

If every woman of childbearing age took enough of the B vitamin folic acid before and during early pregnancy, the incidence of some types of serious birth defects could be reduced by as much as 70 percent. To learn more about healthy pregnancies – and healthy deliveries – enroll in CIGNA's Healthy Babies® program. It's as easy as calling the toll-free number on your CIGNA HealthCare ID card. So when you're expecting, we'll be expecting your call!



Good prenatal care is usually associated with medical care, but it also includes dental care. That's because during pregnancy, you're more susceptible to periodontal (gum) disease, which can put your baby at risk for premature birth. By giving some extra attention to your teeth and gums during this time, you can help ensure that you have a healthy, full-term baby.

The Effect of Hormones

During pregnancy, changes in estrogen and progesterone levels affect the way a woman's body responds to the bacteria responsible for causing gum disease – that can threaten the placenta and fetus and increase the likelihood of a pre-term, low birth-weight delivery. If a woman has chronic gum disease during the second

trimester of pregnancy, she is seven times more likely to give birth prematurely, according to a study by the American Dental Association.^{1,2}

Keeping Your Gums Healthy

Good prenatal dental care can go a long way toward preventing gum disease.³ If you're pregnant, be sure to:

- Brush your teeth twice a day with a soft-bristle toothbrush.
- Floss daily.
- Eat a healthy diet and limit snacks between meals.
- See your dentist regularly.

- Call your dentist if you notice any inflammation, swelling, redness or bleeding of your gums.

Talk to Your Dentist About Dental Care

To take the best care of your teeth during pregnancy, you should schedule an appointment with your dentist for a dental examination and cleaning, either before you become pregnant or soon after. Be sure to tell your dentist how far along you are in your pregnancy and about any problems you may be having. Your dentist can also answer your questions and provide information and advice about taking care of your teeth during pregnancy.

¹American Dental Association News Releases (www.ada.org), September 2001, "Chronic Maternal Gum Disease Strongly Linked to Premature Birth".

²Journal of the American Dental Association, July 2001, pp.1009, "Oral Health During Pregnancy: An Analysis of Information Collected by the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System".

³American Dental Association Frequently Asked Questions, (www.ada.org), "Gum Disease (Periodontal Disease)".

Preventive Care: Helps Prevent Premature Birth



At CIGNA, we have learned that with preventive care, many of the complications and costs associated with an unhealthy birth can be reduced – and a lot of pain and suffering can be avoided. We know the best birth outcomes don't start in the delivery room. They start with planning, education, a healthy pregnancy, and good medical and dental care.

Unfortunately, almost 500,000 babies in the United States are born prematurely.⁴ This takes a tremendous toll on families as premature babies fight to survive and deal with ongoing health challenges throughout their lives. Fortunately, routine prenatal medical and dental care can help prevent premature birth and many of the problems it causes.

⁴March of Dimes®, May 2006

CIGNA HealthCare Healthy Babies® Program

Did You Know?

The safest place in a car for your baby or child is in the middle of the back seat. Use an infant car seat that faces the rear of the car for babies under one year of age; use a toddler seat that faces the front for babies age one and older; and use a booster seat for children older than age four. For the most safety, keep your child in the back seat until age 12.



The CIGNA HealthCare Healthy Babies® program offers a number of services and resources to our pregnant members. The program works to educate expectant parents, identify potential problems with pregnancies and help ensure the delivery of a healthy baby.

The following are some of the features that are available in the program:

- Members who enroll in the Healthy Babies program receive educational materials published by the March of

Dimes® about how to have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

- And they have access to the CIGNA HealthCare 24-Hour Health Information LineSM and may talk to a registered nurse about questions or concerns.
- Members who are considered to have high-risk pregnancies may also take advantage of case management services. The case manager provides information about their risk factors

and helps them coordinate health care services and benefits.

- Members continue to receive support after delivery.

If you are pregnant and would like to enroll in the Healthy Babies program, please call Member Services at the number on your CIGNA HealthCare ID card. For more information about the program, go to **myCIGNA.com**, select "Health Resources/WebMD" and then "Healthy Babies."

Safety In Numbers

Babies will surprise you. They can break plastic safety locks, open a bottle of cleaning solution and squeeze through a pool gate – all faster than you can say, "boo."

That's why baby proofing your home is vitally important. Remove all potentially dangerous items from the baby's level, and accidents will be less likely to occur.

Parents will say, "I never take my eyes off of the baby," but it's nearly impossible to watch them every minute. This is especially true with multiple children, as you can't be three places at once.

Baby proofing your home should be part of prenatal planning.

Here are some suggestions:

- **Crawl room to room.** Identify dangling cords and reachable surfaces with dangerous items that might attract a baby.
- **Don't rely on safety locking systems.** Put cleaning solutions and potentially dangerous items in cabinets higher than a toddler can climb.

- **Remove medicine and other poisons from the medicine cabinet.** Keep them in a lock-box or locking file box on a deep, high counter.
- **Store cleaning solutions in the garage.** Out of the house, they're less of a threat.
- **Make sure household plants are not poisonous to children.**

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