

Beware of sugars added to foods and drinks by manufacturers.

Consuming protein and calcium-rich foods are beneficial to both you and your developing baby. These include foods such as lean meats, eggs, fish, fruits, vegetables and whole grain products as well as dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt etc.).

*Patient Education  
Information  
brought to you by*



**SADA**

THE SOUTH AFRICAN  
DENTAL ASSOCIATION



© 2021  
South African Dental Association  
Private Bag 1  
Houghton, Gauteng  
South Africa  
T: +27 11 484 5288  
E: [info@sada.co.za](mailto:info@sada.co.za)  
[www.sada.co.za](http://www.sada.co.za)

**Oral Health  
and  
Pregnancy**

There is no problem with attending for dental treatment during pregnancy, but professionals do advise that the removal and replacement of silver fillings should be delayed until after the baby is born where possible. Likewise, some dentists think that you should not have a silver amalgam filling while you are breast feeding.

Your dentist may delay taking routine x-rays until after the pregnancy. Some treatment is unavoidable, and may require x-rays to be taken, such as root canal treatment.

## Oral health and pregnancy

During pregnancy, the mouth can be affected by hormonal changes, so it is important to pay special attention to oral health at this time to help keep you and your baby healthy.

A good oral hygiene routine, regular dental check-ups and a healthy lifestyle will help protect your mouth and body.

Practice good oral health for your child  
A child's oral health begins in utero. Poor maternal oral health and malnutrition during pregnancy may lead to disruptions in enamel formation and a predisposition to early childhood caries. Despite being preventable, dental caries is the most common chronic childhood disease globally.

## Visit the dentist regularly

The possible hormonal changes during pregnancy can affect gums, causing swelling or tenderness as well as bleeding.

This condition is called pregnancy gingivitis. If tenderness, bleeding or gum swelling occurs at any time during your pregnancy, tell your dentist or periodontist as soon as possible, as they may recommend more frequent cleanings to prevent this.

If left untreated, gingivitis can develop into more serious gum disease, which may be associated with a higher risk of preterm and low-birthweight babies.

## Work together with your dentist for a healthy mouth

Just like other major diseases, prevention, early detection, and treatment are important in keeping your teeth and mouth healthy, and to stop any potential negative effects on the rest of the body and on the baby.

Tell your dentist if you are pregnant and if you are taking any medications, or about any other special advice from your medical doctor.

If your pregnancy is high-risk or if you have certain medical conditions, your dentist and your doctor may recommend that some treatments be postponed.

## Protect your mouth during morning sickness

Morning sickness can affect some women.

Gastric reflux (regurgitating food or drink) or vomiting can increase the amount of acid your mouth is exposed to, which can damage tooth enamel and increase the risk of decay.

If vomiting, rinse the mouth out with water and either rub toothpaste onto the teeth using a finger or use a fluoridated mouthwash. Wait at least 30 minutes before brushing teeth.

Eat a healthy low-sugar diet

Eat a healthy diet, with limited snacking of foods and drinks high in sugar. Adults should not have more than 6 teaspoons of sugar daily.