

# Women & Oral Health



Dental Health Week

1-7 August 2016



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## Female Puberty & Oral Health

Puberty is a time of raging hormones which can impact upon your oral health. The increase in production of the sex hormones estrogen and progesterone mean more blood is sent to your gums than previously before.

As a result, your teeth become more sensitive to plaque and are increasingly irritated by little bits of food. Called puberty gingivitis, it causes your gums to become red and swollen and more likely to bleed easily.

It is easy an easy condition to treat, with regular flossing and brushing and regular visits to your dentist. If you have a lot of plaque, your dentist may recommend having your teeth professionally cleaned one or two times a year as well.

Making the right food choices by avoiding sugary and sticky foods will also help keep your teeth healthy. If you have braces, you'll need to pay even more attention to cleaning your teeth and we will be happy to show you some special techniques to do this.

## Pregnancy & Oral Health

Pregnancy can have a significant impact upon your oral health, though it is easily managed by you and your dentist. From around two months in, you will begin to notice changes in your mouth due to the hormonal changes within your body including:

- Gums bleeding more easily – pregnancy gingivitis
- Red lumpy lesions along your gum lines – pregnancy tumours
- Reduced saliva, leading to an increase in cavities
- Pale to deep red gums that bleed easily – Gingivostomatitis

Cravings for sugary food is also common and which can lead to an increase in cavities, making fruit over sweets the best choice for snacks. Morning sickness increases the amount of acid in your mouth, which in turn also attacks your teeth. Rather than brushing after vomiting which can remove the protective enamel of your teeth, rinsing your mouth with baking soda and water is a better option.

Regular visits to your dentist both before and during pregnancy are recommended. Let your dentist know if you are or there is the possibility of being pregnant so they can avoid certain procedures such as x-rays and some medicines.

## Menstruation & Oral Health

Periods have been known to cause regular monthly oral health symptoms in some women. Worsening of the symptoms of gingivitis such as swollen, red and bleeding gums is common during menstruation because of the increase in the hormones oestrogen and progesterin at that time of the month. This can also be accompanied by an increase in plaque build-up.

Some women also suffer from bleeding and/or sore gums three to four days before their periods start. Other women suffer from menstrual gingivitis with bleeding gums, red and swollen gums and sores on her tongue and cheeks. The best way of dealing with these symptoms is to continue a regular flossing and brushing routine just as you do throughout the rest of each month.

Research has also found that having certain dental treatments is better during specific times in your menstrual cycle. Having your teeth professionally cleaned is better a week after the end of your period, while a tooth extraction or filling is best done in the days straight after your period has finished.

## Menopause & Oral Health

The hormonal fluctuations which occur during menopause can have a significant impact upon our oral health. As our hormone levels drop, changes occur in our mouths such as fewer saliva secretions, altered taste, burning sensations and inflamed gums. Common signs and symptoms include:

- Pale, dry and shiny gums - menopausal gingivostomatitis
- Burning mouth syndrome – sensitivity to hot and cold food or drink, with intense pain of all areas in your mouth
- Osteoporosis – your jaw bone can shrink, leading to tooth loss and gum reduction
- Dry mouth (xerostomia) caused by low levels of oestrogen, leading to difficulties in chewing and swallowing food, along with an increased risk of tooth decay

During menopause, regular visits to your dentist is recommended. We can help suggest ways to alleviate the symptoms you may be experiencing through both dietary habits and medicine. Regular check-ups will also help identify small problems before they escalate and cause you significant discomfort.

## Dental Health Week Offer

**50% OFF** For Women - Comprehensive Examination, Scale and Clean **\$150**

Book an appointment by 7 August to receive this special offer



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