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Episode 3: Can a woman expect to lose a tooth with every pregnancy?_003

Can a woman expect to lose a tooth with every pregnancy. Stay tuned for the answer to this question and more about how your dental health can affect you and your baby when you are expecting.

Hello everyone. I am Dr Lisa Germain and you are listening to episode number three of This Old Tooth, a podcast devoted to providing you with honest agenda free information about how you can get and keep a beautiful healthy smile for life. Today's episode is devoted to caring for your teeth during pregnancy because as we know what we do and what we don't do during that time also can affect our baby as he or she is developing. We know that oral health is an essential component of overall health and wellbeing and yet unfortunately there's rarely a dentist on the prenatal team and because pregnancy creates such complex hormonal and physiological changes in a woman's body, many mechanisms are shifted to accommodate the growing baby. But what you might not know is that there are some changes in the mouth that either develop or get worse during pregnancy.

You might be familiar with the word inflammation and you've probably heard about periodontal disease. Now these topics will both be discussed in much greater detail in future episodes, but today I want to focus on these things as they relate specifically to pregnancy. To begin with, due to the increased level of both estrogen and progesterone, it is not uncommon for a woman who is pregnant to develop significant inflammation of her gums. Now this actually has a name and it is called pregnancy gingivitis and it is a form of periodontal disease. This happens because along with the increased hormonal level comes an increased response to the plaque and bacteria that build up on your teeth and it is this elevated response that increases the inflammation. So puffy, red and bleeding gums are a very, very common occurrence during pregnancy. But here's the bigger problem. While the signs are seen in the mouth, the condition might affect the development and overall health of your baby, and here is how. When the bacteria from the plaque is released into your circulation or into your bloodstream, it will go directly to the placenta.

There is even a theory that this condition if left untreated can lead to preterm births. So if you are pregnant and you notice that your gums are bleeding, I urge you to see your dentist as soon as you

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possibly can. Now I'm going to describe a couple of other things that could happen in your mouth during pregnancy and then I will discuss what kind of dental treatment is actually safe when you are expecting. So besides pregnancy gingivitis, there's also a higher chance of developing something called a pyogenic granuloma when you're pregnant. These are sometimes called pregnancy tumors, but do not be alarmed. This is not cancer. I am not at all sure why they are called tumors because really they are just an overgrowth of gum tissue that appears between your teeth. Most often during the second trimester, they look a bit like a little red raspberry and if you touch them they will bleed very easily.

But the good news is that they usually disappear after your baby is born. However, if you are concerned, talk to your dentist, because they can be removed and it's a very simple procedure. Now, we all know that one of the major things that happens during pregnancy is the significant increase in nausea and vomiting. I don't know about you out there, but when I was pregnant, I was sick as a dog. I wanted to find out who called it morning sickness and give them a piece of my mind because for me it was 24 seven and trust me, crackers were just a distraction. They didn't help me a bit. And every time I found myself praying to the porcelain goddess, the little dental voice in the back of my head kept whispering, acid erosion, acid erosion, acid erosion. Now I don't want to get graphic about hurling chunks, but the reality is that stomach acid will eat away at your teeth, causing the enamel to deteriorate.

And this is not just from puking up your guts, but also from the frequent episodes of heartburn and reflux that continue throughout pregnancy. So in addition to the problem with the increase of the acid from your stomach bathing your teeth, you also have the problem that pregnancy can cause an increase in cravings for sugary foods and drinks and sugar will increase your risk of tooth decay as well. Now girl, I am the last person who wants to deny you dessert, particularly when you're pregnant, so I am going to pass on a pearl of wisdom to you that will give you peace of mind and keep you smiling. What I recommend is that after you have satisfied your craving for sweets or after a bad bout of nausea and vomiting or heartburn, take a teaspoon of baking soda and mix it in a cup of warm water, then swish it around in your mouth.

Wait about 20 minutes, then brush your teeth. This will neutralize the acid flush away most of the sugar and that way you won't be spreading it all over your teeth. The baking soda will also be very, very effective at helping minimize your pregnancy gingivitis and may even prevent you from getting those nasty pyogenic granulomas. In addition to that, baking soda is a natural cleaning agent and you might notice that your teeth are a little brighter and whiter because it's getting rid of some of the stains. If possible, I would recommend beginning your oral healthcare journey before you get pregnant. Routine dental visits every six months, which should include a cleaning and an examination and treatment for decay, loose fillings and gum disease can prevent further and more expensive problems. It is important to note that pain is not the only sign that there is a problem with a tooth.

In addition, daily, routine. home care is essential. If you have these habits in place, when you become pregnant, you will be so far ahead of the game and maintenance will be so much easier. But what if you

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find that you are pregnant and you realize you haven't seen the dentist in a really long time Well you will be relieved to know that the American Dental Association, the American Congress of obstetricians and gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics, all encourage women to get dental care while pregnant. So here are the top five most important things you need to know about going to the dentist while you are pregnant. Number one, even if you think you might be pregnant, let your dental office know, tell them how far along you are when you make your appointment. Also, let your dentist know if you have received any special advice from your physician. If your pregnancy is high risk or if you have certain medical conditions, your dentist will consult with your physician and they may recommend that some procedures be postponed.

Number two, be sure your dentist knows what if any prescription medications and over the counter drugs you are taking. Now, this includes prenatal vitamins. This information will help your dentist determine what type of prescription, if any, to write for you. Your dentists can consult with your physician to choose medications such as pain relievers or antibiotics that you may safely take during the pregnancy. Both your dentist and physician are concerned about you and your baby, so ask them any question you have about medications they recommend. Number three, if you are pregnant and need a filling or root canal or a tooth pulled, ask your dentist to consult with your physician about using numbing medication. While, many studies have shown that these are safe for pregnant women. Every pregnancy is different. Your doctor should have the final say about that, and this brings me to number four. If you do need a procedure done and it is not an emergency, you might want to postpone it until after your first trimester, but if you find that you need a procedure during your third trimester, here's another tip that will make you a lot more comfortable in the chair.

Lean on your left side with your right hip up in the air. This will keep you from feeling like you need to faint at this stage. The weight of the baby may be heavy enough to press on one of the major blood vessels that brings oxygen to your heart so you could feel faint if you are lying flat on your back. Number five yes, it's safe to get an x ray during pregnancy. While the radiation from dental x-rays is extremely low. Your dentist or hygienist will cover you with a leaded apron that blocks exposure to your stomach. I can't stress enough the importance of a healthy mouth during the nine months that a woman is carrying a child. Even your dentist may struggle with what is appropriate during that time. That is why it is important to understand the essential guidelines so that you or a family member can be your advocate to assure you get the dental treatment you need. So you answer this question for me. Does a woman necessarily have to lose a tooth with every pregnancy? Of course they don't. Not with proper care.

And now for a fun fact: The elephant grinds its molars and grows new ones. This happened six times in the elephant's lifetime. An elephant molar is about seven inches square and can weigh over six pounds, which was the exact weight of my son when he was born. And now that I know that, it is something that neither I nor the elephant can forget!

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For all of my listeners today, I have created a free ebook outlining the top 10 tips for optimum dental care during pregnancy. You can get this for free at: <https://thisoldtooth.com/PREGNANCY> You can also find more information on my website, in the show notes, including articles and research about this topic. On my next show, I will be answering the question, Does Fluoride Lower your IQ? Now that is an episode that you don't want to miss. Thank you so much for tuning in today. I appreciate you more than you know and remember, be true to your teeth or they will be false to you.

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