



Red Bank Smiles

Important Information for Expecting Mothers

First, CONGRATULATIONS! This is a very exciting time, and we are so glad to share it with you. We know there is so much going on that it's often tough to remember everything, so we want to make it easy for you.

The two most common dental diseases are bacterial infections. There are 2 subtypes: those that eat teeth and cause cavities (caries) and those that eat jawbone (periodontitis). These bacteria are passed onto the baby during the first 6 months of birth, mainly by sharing saliva. Moms are the number 1 transmitter of oral bacteria, but other people can share them, too.

The good news is there are some things that you can do to reduce your child's exposure to the bad bacteria and lower their risk for dental disease in the future. The most important thing is to bring the child to a dentist by *either*: their first birthday or when their first tooth erupts.

The next thing you should do is to make sure your mouth (and general health) are impeccable. Brush and waterfloss at least twice daily, once after breakfast and again before you go to bed. Make sure you stay up to date on your dental check-ups and cleanings.

Pregnancy gingivitis, or hormonal swelling of the gums, is common in pregnancy. These swollen gums easily bleed and create a pathway for oral bacteria to enter your blood stream. To be as healthy as possible, we recommended to have your teeth professionally cleaned every 3 months when pregnant, and to do so at month 8.

The last thing you should do is to reduce the amount of bad bacteria in your mouth by using products containing **xylitol**, such as rinses, gum, sweetener, mints, toothpaste, etc. The bad bacteria can't eat xylitol, so they die off, and the good bacteria take over. Also, avoid any mouth rinses with alcohol, such as Listerine and Scope.

Your baby should breast feed for up to 3 years. The nutritional benefits of mothers milk far outweigh any alternative. The emotional and mental connection for both mother and baby is paramount to total health and wellness. Breast feeding is also crucial to proper craniofacial, and full-body, development. Suckling allows the face to grow properly, which will allow for a proper airway for breathing and for the teeth to erupt in their more natural positions. This will allow for better speech, nutrition, and optimum skeletal positioning.

A relaxed jaw has been shown to help in pain management during labor. The direct link between the jaw and pelvis has been known for a long time. If the jaw is relaxed, your pelvis will be more relaxed, making labor simpler. Using a guard during labor will allow your jaw to evenly clench and better distribute the forces- it will allow your body to work better. We will provide you with a short-term guard at your 8-month cleaning appointment.

We know this might seem overwhelming, so please if you have any questions, *ask us!* We love to help.