



## ARTICLE:

[americastoothfairy.org/news/5-essential-health-tips-every-new-or-expectant-mother-should-know](http://americastoothfairy.org/news/5-essential-health-tips-every-new-or-expectant-mother-should-know)

# 5 Essential Health Tips Every New or Expectant Mother Should Know.

We sometimes go to extreme measures to take care of our health while we're pregnant. But oftentimes Momma's wellbeing takes a backseat in favor of the baby's once that cute bundle of joy enters the world. It's understandable—motherhood is exhausting! There never seems to be enough hours in the day to get everything done and when given the option to take a quick nap (dare we dream?!) or take a quick shower, well...

While showering may seem optional, there is one hygiene habit that absolutely must not be neglected—your oral hygiene. If it's easy for you to neglect your own self care in favor of taking care of your baby, consider this: when you keep your mouth healthy, your baby will be healthier too. So, in honor of Mother's Day, here are 5 tips for new and expectant mothers:

### **#1: Healthy moms know for healthy babies to grow she must keep her teeth clean and the spaces between.**

According to the Centers for Disease Control, poor oral health during pregnancy can lead to poor health outcomes for both you and your baby. Pregnant women are at higher risk for gum disease (which has been linked to preterm birth and low birth weight,) and cavities due to changes in diet, so visiting your dentist is an essential part of prenatal care. Don't skip your dental check-ups! (If possible, schedule your appointment on the same day as an OBGYN visit so it won't seem like you're leaving the office for another doctor visit.)

### **#2: Cavities are contagious! Protecting your mouth protects your baby's mouth too.**

Of course this applies to anyone who is caring for your child—the bacteria that causes cavities can be transmitted to your baby's mouth, so it's important to brush and floss daily. Never “clean” a pacifier with your mouth, blow on your baby's food to cool it, share utensils, or let your child put their hands in your mouth (no matter how fascinating they may find it!)

### **#3: Habits are contagious too!**

The old adage is true: Monkey see, monkey do! When your baby sees you brushing every day, she'll be more likely to do it too. These healthy habits learned early will help prevent the pain and expense of treating cavities later.

### **#4: Add one more step to feeding time.**

Newborns eat a lot! For many moms, feeding time is one of the best parts of caring for their baby. Not only do you get to sit down, but it's



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also great bonding time. But once baby has been fed and burped, don't forget one last essential step: clean his gums with a soft cloth and warm water. This helps to remove the sugars that occur naturally in breastmilk or formula (this is what bacteria feeds on) and it also gets the baby used to having his mouth cleaned in preparation for...

**#5: Once the first tooth erupts, it's time to start brushing and going to the dentist.**

It's a myth that baby teeth don't need the same care as permanent teeth since they'll eventually

fall out. When your baby's first tooth appears, brush twice a day with a smear of fluoride-free toothpaste (about the size of a grain of rice) and a soft-bristled brush. Fluoride toothpaste can be used for children over two years old. And of course, take your baby to the dentist for a check-up before their first birthday. You're going anyway, right?

**Want more great oral health tips and resources?**

Get a smile in your inbox! Sign up for one of our fun and informative, quarterly newsletters at [AmericasToothFairy.org](https://AmericasToothFairy.org).

**Resources:**

To learn more about the importance of baby teeth visit: [americastoothfairy.org/news/what-is-the-cure-for-the-common-cavity](https://americastoothfairy.org/news/what-is-the-cure-for-the-common-cavity)

Centers for Disease Control: *Pregnancy and Oral Health*: [cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/features/pregnancy-and-oral-health.html](https://cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/features/pregnancy-and-oral-health.html)



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