## ONE MORE TIP

Mothers can pass germs from their mouths to their newborn child by cleaning pacifiers with their mouth or tasting their food. Germs can cause a child to have tooth decay or cavities later in life. Chewing sugar-free gum after meals and snacks helps decrease germs. This will reduce the chance that you will pass germs onto your child.

MassHealth members that need help finding a dentist please contact:
**1-800-207-5019,**
**TTY 1-800-466-7566**

Need help now?
Get answers right now through the MassHealth Member Portal!
Visit us at **www.masshealth-dental.net**

# A PREGNANT WOMEN'S GUIDE TO HEALTHY GUMS

# WHAT EVERY PREGNANT WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HEALTHY GUMS.

**A healthy mouth is important for you and your unborn child. There is a link between a mother's gum health and the health of her unborn baby. Women with gum disease, also called gingivitis, are at risk of delivering a baby too early. This is because the infection in the mother's mouth, caused by gum disease, can lead to early labor.**

## Causes of Gum Disease

Germs in your mouth (called plaque) can cause gum disease. You should brush and floss every day to help remove plaque from your teeth. If plaque is not removed, it can cause an infection called gingivitis. Hormone changes during your pregnancy can also cause gingivitis. Smoking and not eating healthy can cause gingivitis, too.

## Signs of Gum Disease

- A bad taste in mouth
- Continual bad breath
- Red or swollen gums
- Tender gums
- Gums that bleed while brushing
- Gums separating from the teeth or loose teeth
- Pain when chewing
- Pus around teeth and gums
- A hard crust on your teeth called tartar

## Reduce Your Risk of Gum Disease

Every mother wants to decrease her risk of having an unhealthy baby. Follow the steps below and make a dentist appointment right away.

- Brush and floss daily
- Eat healthy foods and snacks such as fruits, vegetables and cheese
- Take vitamins your doctor prescribes
- Do not smoke or drink alcohol
- See your dentist at least twice a year

## Brush and Floss For a Healthy Smile

One of the easiest ways to prevent gum disease is to brush and floss your teeth every day. When you brush and floss, you break up plaque before it can stick to your teeth. Plus, you will be less likely to get cavities.

- Brush your teeth at least twice each day; once in the morning after breakfast and once before you go to sleep. Flossing helps you clean between your teeth. It removes food and plaque from the spots you can not reach with your toothbrush. Your gums may be sore or bleed at first. Do not worry, they will heal. It should stop once the plaque is removed.
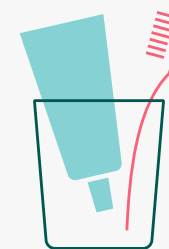
**EVERY WOMAN SHOULD VISIT A DENTIST DURING PREGNANCY.**