



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Mother's Day: A good time to remember oral health care for children

Delta Dental offers tips to keep little ones' teeth healthy

Ankeny, IA (April 28, 2010) – Being a mom brings plenty of smiles. And taking care of yours – and your little ones' smiles – is an important task. In recognition of this and Mother's Day, Delta Dental of Iowa is offering the following oral health tips for moms and their children.

Oral Health and Pregnancy

Many women experience some changes in their oral health during pregnancy due to a surge in hormones that can cause gum tissues to exaggerate a normal reaction to plaque. So-called "pregnancy gingivitis" affects most pregnant women and it generally begins to surface as early as the second month. If untreated, gingivitis can lead to periodontitis, a more serious form of gum disease.

New research suggests a possible link between gum disease and preterm, low-birth-weight babies. "Although findings are inconclusive and further research is needed, we do know preventive dental care during pregnancy improves oral and overall health and is safe for both mother and child," said Dr. Ed Schooley, dental director for Delta Dental of Iowa.

It is recommended that pregnant women schedule a checkup in their first trimester to determine whether they need a cleaning. The dentist will assess the mother's oral condition and determine how frequently the mother will need to be seen during her pregnancy in order to maintain optimal oral health. The best defense against plaque during pregnancy is brushing after eating, flossing daily and limiting sugary food and drinks.

Building an Oral Health Foundation

Did you know, babies who nap or sleep at night with a bottle containing anything but plain water can develop baby bottle tooth decay? This happens when sugary liquids pool around an infant's or toddler's teeth and gums for long periods. Even liquids that are good for the baby, such as milk, formula, breast milk and fruit juices contain natural sugars that can promote decay. To prevent tooth decay, clean the baby's gums with a damp, soft

cloth or gauze pad after each feeding. Begin brushing the baby's teeth with a small soft toothbrush as soon as the first tooth erupts. Continue cleaning gums in the toothless areas. Around age 1, your child should have his or her first visit to the dentist.

Creating Good Oral Health Habits

By the time a child is three or able to spit start brushing his or her teeth with a pea-sized dab of fluoride toothpaste. Help your child brush properly twice daily, until he or she has the motor skills to handle the toothbrush alone. Then, continue to monitor brushing closely. A parent will need to assist the child until he or she learns how to clean every nook and cranny. The dentist will be able to spot any areas that may require extra attention when brushing. During routine dental exams, the dentist will also check for orthodontic problems, clean and polish teeth, apply a fluoride treatment and maintain a dental history for the child.

This Mother's Day, don't forget about all the oral health responsibilities that go along with becoming and being a mother. For more information about ways to protect your teeth during pregnancy and building a lifetime of good oral health habits for your little one, visit www.deltadentalia.com

Delta Dental of Iowa is the largest and most experienced provider of dental benefits in the state. As a not-for-profit, Delta Dental of Iowa invests in oral health projects through the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation that focus on access to care, prevention, education and research. The Iowa company is a member of the Delta Dental Plans Association, a national organization of not-for-profit Delta Dental plans. The national association is the largest dental benefits carrier in the nation providing coverage to 54 million people in more than 93,000 employer groups.

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