



Women's Oral Health

Due to hormonal changes throughout a woman's life, there can be an increase in her risk of tooth and gum disease. Puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, breast feeding and menopause – all cause fluctuating levels of hormones which can lead to swelling and changes to the gums. Bacteria are more likely to harbour around tender bleeding gums so diligent oral care is very important.

Pregnancy

Pregnancy Gingivitis

Many women find their gums bleed easily when they are pregnant. This is because gums are more sensitive to plaque. If pregnancy gingivitis occurs a visit to the dentist is recommended. Attention to oral hygiene and professional cleaning will help reduce plaque and prevent gingivitis. Losing a tooth after each baby is a myth!



Damage from Stomach Acids

Nausea and vomiting and the resulting acids in the mouth can damage the teeth by eroding enamel. Use a fluoride mouth rinse to neutralise acid and protect teeth.

Food Cravings

Food cravings during pregnancy which can result in eating sweet or sticky food will increase the risk of dental decay. Nuts are a good alternative. They will reduce the cravings and not harm the teeth.

Puberty and Menstruation

The surge of hormones during puberty and menstruation may cause swollen, tender gums for some women at different times of the month. Ulcers or cold sores are more likely to occur.

Menopause

The onset of menopause and the decline in female hormone levels can result in new oral problems such as pain in the mouth, burning sensations, dry mouth or a bad taste. Gums may become sore and sensitive. These symptoms can all be relieved by continuation of good oral hygiene and regular visits to your dentist.



Medications

The oral contraceptive pill and hormone replacement therapy can be responsible for red, bleeding, swollen gums. Women may experience dry mouth due to many medications such as antidepressants, heart medicines and fluid tablets. See your dentist for advice on how best to deal with your symptoms. Some types of diet pills can decrease the production of saliva which can lead to tooth decay and gum disease. If you are taking diet pills, drink extra water and use a fluoride mouthrinse daily.