

Basic Facts

Dental Caries (cavities) is an infectious and transmissible disease

There are many “good” and “bad” bacteria in mouths

The “bad” bacteria feed on sugars and carbohydrates in your diet, producing acid by-products

These acid by-products eat away teeth (causing cavities), allowing bacteria to move further into the tooth.

Mutans streptococci is the bacteria most strongly associated with dental caries (that is BAD)

The best way to reduce or eliminate cavities is to have fewer “bad” bacteria

Your Hygiene Matters

The major source from which infants acquire strep mutans is their mother

Suppression of maternal reservoirs of strep mutans will prevent or delay infection of the baby

Early colonization by strep mutans is a major risk factor for future cavities

Studies show that gum disease (periodontitis) significantly increases a mother’s risk of premature birth

A thorough cleaning (scaling and root planning) can reduce premature births by as much as 84% in women with periodontitis

Xylitol Can Help

Xylitol, a sugar alcohol, is a sugar substitute with a sweetness equal to sugar

Xylitol can prevent cavities in children

Reduces high strep mutans levels in mothers, which will prevent infection of their infants

Reduce strep mutans levels in young children, reducing cavity risk

Children of mothers who used Xylitol had the lowest levels of strep mutans

Higher levels of Xylitol can reduce otitis media (ear infection) by 40%

Xylitol may be safely used by pregnant women and nursing mothers

Studies show:

10-year-old children showed 33 to 59 % cavity reduction using Xylitol

Children of mothers treated with Xylitol through pregnancy and infant stage had lower levels of strep mutans and 70% lower cavity rate at 5 years of age compared to the children of mothers treated with fluoride.

6-year-old children who chewed Xylitol gum until 8 years of age had a cavity risk reduction of 59%, 5 years later (at age 13). Teeth that erupted after 1 year of gum chewing had a risk reduction of 93%.

Our Recommendations

Mothers get a thorough dental cleaning and exam early in the 2nd trimester

Expectant mothers chew Xylitol gum 3-5 times a day for 5 minutes and practice good hygiene

Your child’s first visit to the dentist at age 2 - 3 to learn about diet, brushing and habits to avoid

Wipe your babies gums with washcloth after feeding, and begin brushing as soon as teeth appear

Floss your child’s teeth once the back molars touch

NEVER put a child to bed with a bottle, and do not let them have constant access to sippy cups