



Oral Health and Pregnancy

Healthy Smiles From the Start

Whatcom County Oral Health Coalition (OHC)

**Broad-based coalition
working to improve oral health
through prevention, education, and
increased access to care.**

Healthy Smiles from The Start

Vision

Raise a new generation free from the overwhelming dental disease common among low-income families and individuals in Whatcom County

Focus

Pregnancy and early infancy

Caries is an Infectious Disease

- Strep Mutans is an oral bacteria that breaks down sugars into acids which break down tooth enamel

Importance of Pregnancy

- Women with untreated dental cavities during pregnancy carry strep mutans
- Mothers with untreated cavities transmit the bacteria to infants.
 - Kissing
 - Tasting food/licking spoon

Children

- Early colonization increases caries risk.
- Permanent colonization begins at the time the first teeth erupt.
- Dental caries most common chronic disease of childhood and untreated become a chronic cumulative disease in adulthood.

Treatment in Pregnancy

- Reduces and/or eliminates infection
 - Fill cavities
 - Reduce bacteria
 - Fluoride
 - Xylitol gum
 - Chlorhexidine

Treatment in Pregnancy

Creates opportunity for oral health education

- Bottle propping
- Oral hygiene
- Nutrition

Obstetric Providers

- Refer pregnant women for dental care
 - Untreated dental caries are especially prevalent among women on Medicaid
- Establish agreed upon protocols for treatment in pregnancy
 - Models exist:
 - http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/dental/oral_health_care_pregnancy_early_childhood.htm

Increase Capacity

- Private practice dentists
- Community Health Centers
 - Seamar
 - Interfaith

Obstetric Providers

- Proposal:
 - Establish work-group to work out details
 - Dr. Stephen Wagoner

Contacts

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