



Teaching Oral Health to Pregnant Moms & Families

Lesson Outline



OBJECTIVE

To equip Women Health Professionals with a comprehensive structure and key talking points to teach oral health lessons to pregnant moms and families.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Educating pregnant moms and families on oral health leads to better maternal and child health outcomes. The Delivering Smiles program offers research-backed guidance and resources, emphasizing early and regular oral health care, safe treatment during pregnancy, and access to support in Arkansas.



ArkansasFoundation



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PURPOSE

The Delivering Smiles Maternal Oral Health Program equips Women's Health Professionals with everything they need to bring oral health education into their work with pregnant moms and children. This ready-made toolkit includes a lesson outline, slide presentation content, facilitator scripts, hands-on activities, and educational tip sheets, allowing professionals to deliver effective lessons with little to no additional preparation. Because it's designed for flexibility, the program fits seamlessly into lunch-and-learn sessions, formal presentations, or classroom settings, making it simple to incorporate into existing maternal health programming.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the program:

- Pregnant Moms will be educated about oral health and how it effects pregnancy.
- Learn signs of Dental Decay
- Demonstrate proper brushing techniques

BACKGROUND: DELIVERING SMILES PROGRAM

Delta Dental of Arkansas Foundation is a nonprofit organization committed to oral health, access to care, dental education, preventive care, community health initiatives, and improving Arkansans' well-being. The Delivering Smiles program utilizes evidence- and research-based practices to advance prenatal oral health. Program objectives include breaking barriers for pregnant individuals lacking a dental home, fostering open prenatal oral health conversations between women and health professionals, and raising awareness on promoting improved oral health among pregnant populations.

SUGGESTED TEACHING FLOW OR DISCUSSION OUTLINE FOR WOMEN HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

1. Introduce yourself and the importance of oral health in pregnancy.
2. Present background on the Delivering Smiles program.
3. Discuss key oral health messages, focusing on the link to pregnancy and overall health.
4. Review common oral health concerns, symptoms, and risk factors in pregnancy.
5. Review signs of dental decay and prevention tips.
6. Explain how oral health influences the health of the baby.
7. Provide proper brushing and flossing techniques
8. Provide practical dental care guidance.
9. Highlight Arkansas-Specific data and resources available to support families.
10. Facilitate an open discussion and distribute dental care resources.



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KEY ORAL HEALTH MESSAGES FOR PREGNANCY

- Oral health is critical during pregnancy as maternal oral health impacts the baby's overall health.
- Adopt Dental care tips: brush and floss regularly; consume more calcium and necessary nutrients; schedule a dental checkup and cleaning while pregnant.
- Optimal dental care should ideally occur before pregnancy, but if needed, the second trimester is the safest time for treatment.
- Monitor for signs of gingivitis, such as swollen or inflamed gums.
- Promote a healthy diet including fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and lean meats.

COMMON ORAL HEALTH CONCERNS AND EXPLANATIONS

- Pregnant individuals often experience gingivitis and periodontitis (gum disease), dental erosion (tooth damage), dental caries (cavities), diabetes, and risks associated with cardiovascular disease/heart disease connections.
- Stages of gum disease include gingivitis (red, inflamed, bleeding gums), periodontitis (pockets, moderate bone loss), and advanced gum disease (severe bone loss, deep pockets, tooth at risk of falling out).
- Explain cavities and erosion: caries are examples of cavities/tooth decay, and erosion is related to tooth damage.
- Conditions like nausea or vomiting can expose teeth to acid that contribute to softening and wear down enamel.

HOW ORAL HEALTH AFFECTS BABY AND FAMILY HEALTH

- Healthy baby section: active tooth decay in pregnant individuals may transmit bacteria to the baby, elevating risk of tooth decay early in life.
- Prenatal nutrition: Practices such as calcium-rich foods support baby's healthy teeth development, while some habits (e.g., cravings for sugary foods/treats) may increase cavity risk.
- Diabetes and heart disease section: oral bacteria/inflammation are linked to diabetes and heart disease; keeping bacterial levels low and preventing bleeding through prevention of inflammation (such as gingivitis and periodontitis) is vital.
- Chronic gum disease improves chances of negative outcomes for both mom and baby.



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SIGNS OF DENTAL DECAY AND PREVENTION TIPS

- The best way to stop tooth decay is to brush your child's teeth two times every day.
- See the dentist twice a year, starting at age 1.
- Gum Wiping
- Brushing Primary Teeth
- Harmful Bacteria
- Decay Process

PROPER BRUSHING AND FLOSSING TECHNIQUES

- Under 2 use a smear of fluoride toothpaste
- Over 2 use a pea-sized of fluoride toothpaste
- Place your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to the gums
- Gently move the brush in small circular strokes
- Brush the outer surfaces, the inner surfaces, and the chewing surfaces of the teeth
- To clean the inside surfaces of the front teeth, tilt the brush vertically and make several up-and-down strokes
- Continue this for 2 minutes
- Expel toothpaste from mouth
- Flossing in the evening is best to remove all food left in teeth before bed.

PRACTICAL DENTAL CARE GUIDANCE FOR PREGNANT PATIENTS

- Scientific evidence confirms that preventive, diagnostic, and restorative dental treatment is safe during pregnancy.
- The ideal period for treatment is the second trimester; best timing overall is before or after delivery.
- Addressing urgent needs such as infection or pain should occur promptly, preferably in the second trimester if already pregnant.
- Avoid delaying necessary treatment, as it can result in additional complications.



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ARKANSAS-SPECIFIC CONTEXT AND RESOURCES

- In 2021, only 41% of pregnant individuals in Arkansas visited a dentist's office for their teeth cleaned
- Promote awareness of local programs, clinics, and outreach provided by DDAR Foundation and community partners
- Share information on accessible resources and support for pregnant individuals seeking oral health services

CLOSING SUMMARY

Educating pregnant moms and families on oral health leads to better maternal and child health outcomes. The Delivering Smiles program offers research-backed guidance and resources, emphasizing early and regular oral health care, safe treatment during pregnancy, and access to support in Arkansas.

FINAL SECTIONS FOR REFERENCE AND REVIEW

- Baby Smile Power Oral Health Tips
- Tips for Understanding Your Oral Health
- Delivering Smiles Dental Care Tips
- Dental Care Resources in Arkansas