



## **DENTAL WORK DURING PREGNANCY**

Dental work during pregnancy is safe. In fact, it is recommended that women take special care of their teeth and gums during pregnancy so they will be able to maintain adequate food intake.

It is safe to have x-rays of your teeth during pregnancy. According to the American College of Radiology there is no single diagnostic procedure that results in enough radiation to cause detriment to the developing fetus. Studies have shown that between 8 and 15 weeks the risk of severe mental retardation is approximately 4% for an exposure equal to 10 rads. The exposure from x-rays of your teeth is well below one millionth of a rad. Additionally, your dentist will shield your abdomen during the x-rays.

It is safe to have your teeth cleaned, cavities filled, root-canal work, or tooth extractions during pregnancy. Some women choose to wait until the second trimester to receive treatment, when the risk of teratogenesis decreases. Be sure to let your dentist know that you are pregnant, so that he or she can avoid certain anesthetic medications. All local anesthetics are safe during pregnancy. Additionally, most antibiotics used during dental procedures are safe during pregnancy. Again, be sure to inform your dentist so he or she can contact your physician if there is a question.

No association between dental caries and pregnancy has been established. There is no evidence that dental caries worsen with pregnancy. An association between pregnancy and gingival hyperplasia has been proven. This condition causes an enlargement of the gingiva and is related to pregnancy hormones. In association with this, women may notice that their gums bleed. Once the gingiva shrinks back to normal size, bleeding should subside.

### **THOMAS G. STOVALL, M.D.**

Dr. Stovall is a Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, Tennessee and Partner of Women's Health Specialists, Inc.

Date Published: 2004-03-10

**Health Information Provided by Women's Health Specialists**  
7800 Wolf Trail Cove, Germantown, TN 38138, (901) 682-9222, [www.whsobgyn.com](http://www.whsobgyn.com)

This information is for educational purposes only. It does not represent comprehensive coverage of the topics addressed and is not a substitute for direct consultation with your health care provider. Always consult a health care provider regarding your specific condition. Trademarks referred to are the property of their respective owners.