

## Link between gum disease and Preterm birth Hema Patel, DDS



Did you know that Pregnant women with chronic periodontal (gum) disease during the second trimester are up to seven times more likely to give birth prematurely, according to a study published in the July'01 *Journal of the American Dental Association*.

In the United States, approximately 10 percent of women deliver before term (defined as 37 weeks of gestation). Preterm delivery is the major cause of newborn death, while surviving premature babies are at significant risk of developing serious and lasting health problems.

"The best advice to give a woman contemplating pregnancy is to try to prevent periodontal disease from developing." Pregnant women are encouraged to see dentist for their regular check up and cleaning more frequently than other group of people. Hormonal changes during pregnancy has an exaggerated response to plaque build up and are more likely to get gum disease such as gingivitis. (Gingivitis means inflammation of gums with the symptoms including bleeding of the gums while brushing, bad breath and red, swollen gums)

Some Pregnant women develop a Tumor-Like Gingival Enlargement, which is also called a Pregnancy Tumor. Pregnancy Tumor is not a cancerous lesion; it is an inflammatory response to local irritation, like plaque and tarter build up, which is modified by patient's hormonal conditions. It usually appears after the third month of pregnancy but may occur earlier.

Most Gingival disease during pregnancy can be prevented by the removal of plaque and tarter with meticulous oral hygiene including brushing and flossing after meals. Although spontaneous reduction in the gingival conditions commonly follows the termination of pregnancy, the complete elimination of the disease requires the removal of all forms of local irritations.

Should you have any questions regarding this or any other dental related conditions, feel free to contact me at **(510) 796-1656**.

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