

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's 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 you 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