



Oral Health as Part of the Pregnancy Conversation

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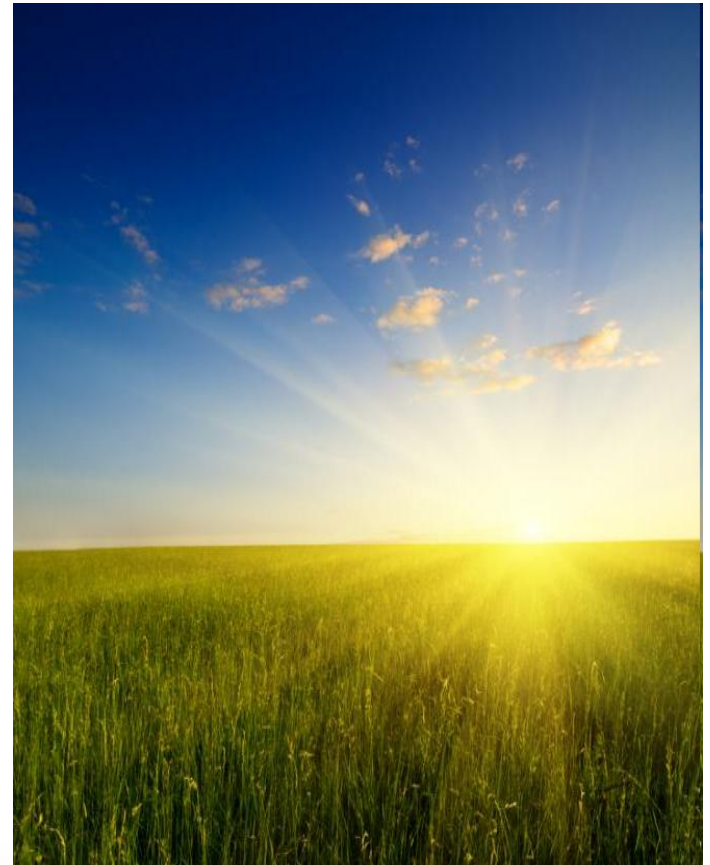


Children's Dental Health Project

CDHP was created in 1997 as the voice for children's oral health.

Vision: At CDHP, we look forward to the achievement of oral health for all children to ensure that they reach their full potential.

Mission: Creating and advancing innovative solutions to achieve oral health for all children.





Children's Dental Health Project

Our Approach

1. Reduce disease burden
2. Improved access to quality care

Our Goals

- To **Prevent childhood tooth decay**, because cavities are the result of a disease that is overwhelmingly preventable.
- To **Promote solutions** that are grounded in the best available research and supporting exploration when evidence is lacking
- To **Engage policymakers** and other decision-makers in addressing ongoing inequities in oral health and to implement cost-effective solutions.





Perinatal Oral Health



Why is Perinatal Oral Health Important?

- **Oral health is key to overall health and wellbeing**
- **Pregnancy increases women's risk for oral infections**
- **Research exhibits associations between periodontal disease and birth outcomes**
- **Perinatal oral health contributes to establishing good oral health for children**
- **The safety of dental care during pregnancy is confirmed**



Brown, A. Health care during the perinatal period: a policy brief. Washington, DC: National Maternal and Child Health Resource Center, 2008.

Xiong X, Buekens P, Vastardis S, Yu SM. Periodontal disease and pregnancy outcomes: State-of-the-science. *Obstetric and Gynecological Survey* 2007;62(9):605-15.

Kumar J, Samelson R. eds. Oral health care during pregnancy and early childhood: practice Guidelines. Albany, NY: New York State Department of Health, 2006.



Barriers

- **Lack of awareness of relationship between oral and overall health**
- **Concern regarding safety of dental x-rays, materials, and medications**
- **Fear**
- **Low priority given to oral health**
- **Provider reluctance to provide care during pregnancy**
- **Lack of insurance coverage**



CDA Foundation. Oral health during pregnancy and early childhood: Evidence-based guidelines for health professionals. Guidelines, February 2010.



Improving Perinatal Oral Health Project **Focus Groups**



Improving Perinatal and Infant Oral Health Project

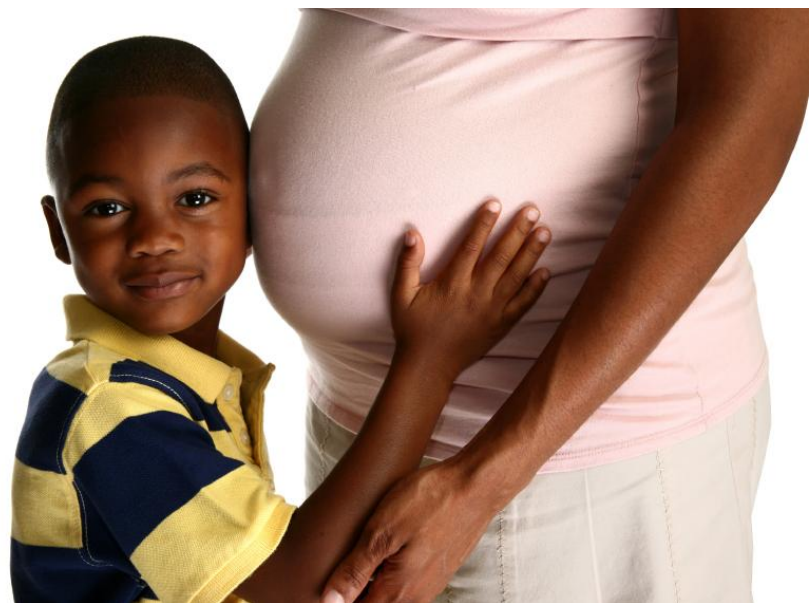
- Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau grant
- Collaboration between the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and Children's Dental Health Project
- Goals: to promote awareness of and access to perinatal and infant oral health on national, state, and local levels
- 6 year project, ended January 2011





Advancements in Perinatal Oral Health

- **Increased awareness of the link between oral and systemic health, and the role of pregnancy**
- **Evidence documents an association between periodontal disease and adverse pregnancy outcomes, including preterm birth and low birth weight in infants**
- **Research confirms the safety of oral health care during the perinatal period**



Kumar J, Samelson R. eds. Oral health care during pregnancy and early childhood: Practice Guidelines. Albany, NY: New York State Department of Health, 2006.



Activities

- **Public education on the infectious and transmissible nature of dental caries. Partners include Today's Child Magazine, National Healthy Start Association, and Parents Magazine**
- **Series of focus groups with low-income pregnant women and new mothers**
- **Patterning with “Mommy Blogs” to disseminate perinatal oral health messages based on research via trusted messengers**
- **Work with Maryland Oral Health Literacy Campaign**
- **Pushing for National Oral Health Public Education Campaign**



Focus Groups

When: 2009

Where: Urban and rural locations in Maryland

Who: With low-income pregnant women and mothers with children age 0-2
(22 African American, 12 Caucasian)

What: 90 minute discussion sessions w/ professional moderator

Buerlein JK, Horowitz AM, Child WL. Perspectives of Maryland women regarding oral health during pregnancy and early childhood. *Journal of Public Health Dentistry* 2011 72. Available online at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1752-7325.2010.00211.x/references>



Focus Groups

Topics:

- What women know and do to promote health during pregnancy
- Past and current use of dental care system
- Current oral health practices for their children
- Personal oral health practices
- What women know about preventing tooth decay
- Reactions to brochures and messages about oral health, including suggestions for promoting oral health for mothers and their infants.



Focus Groups - Results

Oral Health Knowledge:

- Most had exposure to basic oral health knowledge
 - Bottles/sippy cups, sugar, mouth cleaning
- Myths and misperceptions
 - Tap water, care during pregnancy, unaware of fluoride benefits, sugar levels in foods/drinks
- Advice from professionals varied and was not given early enough
 - Age for dental visits, baby bottle mouth



Focus Groups - Results

Dental Care Experiences:

- Most had generally negative feelings about dental care
 - Pain and fear in earlier experiences – fear about infant
 - Positive things said about corporate urban clinics
- Cost is a major deterrent
 - Most had not been to dentist since childhood
- Misconceptions about care
 - Few knew of importance and/or safety of care during pregnancy



Focus Groups - Results

Women's Current Oral Health Practices:

- Tooth brushing most common practice
- Flossing only mentioned after prodding by moderator
- Other practices mentioned infrequently





Focus Groups - Results

Response to Brochures and Messages

- Many women asked questions about brochures
- Concepts not explained well enough – jargon/technical terms
- Women had gotten conflicting information on/did not fully understand some concepts
 - Transmission not well understood: *“my daughter’s pediatrician said it was ok (for me) to chew up her food because of building her immune system...”*



Focus Groups – Lessons Learned

- Women are simply unaware of importance of oral health during pregnancy
- Women need information earlier about their oral health and their children
 - They are willing to implement but need the tools
- Consistent messages from trusted providers are key
- Plain language in messaging is often overlooked
- Prescriptive messages need to be backed up by addressing fears and misconceptions



Moving Forward

- **Educate Providers**
 - Dental care during pregnancy is safe and benefits mother and child
 - Provide information early and often
- **Work with health plans**
 - Improve access, implement guidelines, promote care, develop educational materials
- **Advocate State dental coverage for pregnant women**
 - Medicaid, Health Care Reform
- **Continue to educate public, especially low-income**
 - Importance of care, oral health behaviors, transmission
 - Simple messages
 - Address Fears
- **Coordinate with other providers**
 - Pediatricians, OBGYN's – referrals & patient education
 - Promote age one dental visit



Contact Information

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