

Women's Oral Health

Patient Fact Sheet

As a woman, you have unique oral health needs. Changes in your body, lifestyle and medications may affect your oral health. A well-balanced diet and regular dental check-ups are also vital to both good oral health and overall health. There are several ways in which changes to your body can affect your oral health:

Puberty

The surge of hormones during puberty may increase blood circulation in the gums. Your mouth may become more sensitive to irritants such as plaque, and this can lead to gingivitis. Be sure to floss and brush regularly to ensure good oral health. Dental check-ups are also vital at this time.

Menstruation

Your menstrual cycle does not usually cause changes in the gum tissue; however, the hormonal fluctuations associated with menstruation may cause changes in the gum tissues of some women. These changes cause gums to swell and bleed during the days prior to menstruation. You may experience heightened sensitivity to pain, hot and cold fluctuations and pressure in the mouth during menses. It is important to note that most studies reveal existing gum inflammation is aggravated by menstruation rather than caused by it.

Pregnancy

Some women may experience gingivitis while pregnant; however, pregnancy does not cause gingivitis. Due to hormonal changes while pregnant, you may be more sensitive to plaque, which results in swollen gums that bleed easily. If you notice any changes to your oral health while pregnant, consult your dentist.

Oral Contraceptives

If you are taking oral contraceptives, you may be susceptible to the same oral conditions that affect pregnant women. Oral contraceptives contain the hormones progesterone and/or estrogen. If you take oral contraceptives, you may experience a heightened sensitivity to plaque, which may result in gingivitis. You should advise your dentist if you are taking oral contraceptives as this may affect certain dental treatments.

Menopause and Post-Menopause

As you reach menopause or post-menopause you may experience discomfort, pain and sometimes burning in your mouth and gums. You may also find that your taste perceptions may change, especially in relation to salty, peppery and/or sour foods. Experts report that gingivostomatitis during menopause affects a small percentage of women. Symptoms include gums that look dry or shiny, bleed easily or range in colour from abnormally pale to deep red. If you have developed osteoporosis, xerostomia or Burning Mouth Syndrome, you may experience changes in your oral health due to these illnesses and you should discuss this with your dentist.

If you have any further questions please call our office at 905-508-2244.