

CIGNA is a Proud Sponsor of March of Dimes



At CIGNA, we have learned that with preventive care, many of the complications and costs associated with an unhealthy birth can be reduced – and a lot of pain and suffering can be avoided. We know the best birth outcomes don't start in the delivery room. They are the product of planning, education, a healthy pregnancy and good medical and dental care.

Unfortunately, almost 500,000 babies in the United States are born prematurely, before the 37th completed week. This means that **one in eight** babies is born too early (11.9 percent of all live births). It takes a tremendous toll on families as premature babies fight to survive and may have ongoing health challenges throughout their lives.

Did you know that research has linked periodontal (gum) disease to pre-term birth and low birth weight babies?

Recent studies have shown that:

- Women with periodontal disease may have an increased risk for pre-term, low birth weight deliveries.
- Pregnant women with chronic gum disease during the second trimester are up to **seven times** more likely to give birth prematurely.^{1,2}
- Changes in estrogen and progesterone levels due to pregnancy multiply a woman's potential to develop gum disease.³ This phenomenon, known as "pregnancy gingivitis," occurs frequently in pregnant women.
- Data suggests that each year, periodontal disease may be causing as many as 18% of preterm births and low birth weight deliveries.⁴

Symptoms of gum disease

- Red, tender, or swollen gums
- Gums that bleed when you brush them
- Dark red or receding gums
- Bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth
- Loose teeth

Healthier Gums May Lead To Healthier Babies

If you are pregnant, you are urged to:

- Increase your personal oral hygiene efforts and seek regular professional dental care.
- Keep all scheduled dental appointments and follow a regular treatment plan.
- Notify your dentist if you are taking any medications; or if you have noticed any inflammation; loose teeth; or swelling, redness or bleeding of your gums.
- Tell your dentist how far along you are in your pregnancy (the number of weeks) at every appointment.

Gum disease is preventable.⁵

- Brush your teeth twice a day with a soft-bristle toothbrush
- Floss daily
- Eat a healthy diet and limit snacks between meals
- See your dentist regularly

For more information, visit our web site at www.cigna.com.

"CIGNA Dental" refers to the following operating subsidiaries of CIGNA Corporation: Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, and CIGNA Dental Health, Inc. and its operating subsidiaries and affiliates.

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You have so many choices.

1 American Dental Association News Releases, Sept. 2001.

2 Journal of the American Dental Association, July 2001 "Oral Health During Pregnancy: An Analysis of Information."

3 American Dental Association, Today's News, (www.ada.org), March 28, 2002, "Study bolsters connection between periodontal disease, premature birth".

4. National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research: "The Oral-Systemic Health Connection"

5 American Dental Association, Frequently Asked Questions, (www.ada.org), "Gum Disease (Periodontal Disease)".

