



Expectant Mothers Must Care About Their Oral Hygiene

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Pregnancy is a time when women are responsible not only for their own health but the health and well being of their unborn baby. A new report shows the first documented link between fetal death and a mother's pregnancy-related gum disease.

The patient, a 35-year-old woman, delivered a full-term stillborn baby in Santa Monica, CA. During her pregnancy, she had experienced severe gum bleeding, a symptom of pregnancy-related gingivitis, according to the report published in the February issue of *Ostetrics & Gynecology*.

Dr. Edgard El Char, MS, DDS, a leading periodontist in New York City, said this is serious warning sign for expecting mothers as well as women who are considering pregnancy:

"This issue should be taken very seriously by the entire medical community. Medical professionals should encourage all women who are pregnant, or looking to become pregnant, to be evaluated by a board-certified periodontist who is qualified in the diagnosis of gum disease and related conditions, and intervene with the proper treatment protocol."

Bleeding gums are common in pregnant women, with an estimated 75% of pregnant women experiencing the issue. Gingivitis, especially common during the second to eight months of pregnancy, can cause red, puffy or tender gums that bleed when you brush. This sensitivity is the body's exaggerated response to plaque and is caused by an increased level of progesterone in the system. If left untreated, the bleeding can allow bacteria into the mother's body to infect the fetus.