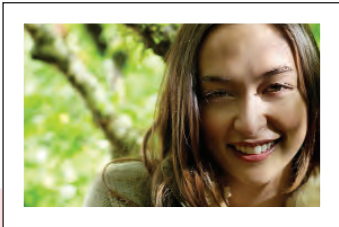




## Dear Readers



### GET SCREENED!

Healthy Start offers services for you when you are pregnant or between pregnancies, and for your baby from birth to age three. Services are free and are not based on income, educational background or ethnic makeup. Healthy Start services are based on a “screening”—a simple set of questions to determine if there are any risks that could affect your pregnancy and your baby’s growth or development.

Services include education and counseling in childbirth, breastfeeding, parenting, nutrition, smoking cessation, and between pregnancy care.

Find out if you qualify for Healthy Start services by saying “Yes” to a Healthy Start screening! Even if you do not wish to obtain any Healthy Start services, by completing the screenings you are helping ALL mothers and their babies in your community.

## More Than a Pretty Smile

*Why oral health is important for pregnant moms and babies*

*Everyone wants a beautiful smile. When in fact, it’s more important to strive toward good oral health. Oral health includes the teeth, gums, jawbone and supporting tissues. This issue of “Blossom” discusses the special need for good oral health for pregnant women, as well as oral health concerns for babies such as teething, care of babies’ teeth and thumb-sucking.*

**Oral Health for Pregnant Women**  
*How Does Pregnancy Affect a Woman’s Teeth and Gums?* If possible, it’s best for women to have a dental checkup before becoming pregnant to make sure there are no dental problems that might affect their babies. After becoming pregnant,

about half of women develop a condition called “pregnancy gingivitis.” This may cause the gums to bleed and become swollen, red and tender. A more serious gum infection, called “periodontal disease,” destroys attachment fibers and supporting bone that hold teeth in the mouth. If this condition is present, it’s important to see a periodontist—a dentist who specializes in treating the disease. Because pregnancy can affect women’s oral health, women should see their dentist on a regular basis and make sure they know how to maintain good oral hygiene as well as a healthy, nutritious diet.

*continued...*



### Did You Know?

**It’s a myth that calcium is lost from the mother’s teeth during pregnancy. Rather, calcium for the baby’s needs comes from the calcium in foods that the mother eats. Thus, it’s important that a pregnant mother’s diet includes dairy products and any supplements recommended by the doctor to ensure she is getting all the calcium she and her baby need.**

## Central Healthy Start

For more information about Healthy Start services, call your local Healthy Start Care Coordinator:

**Citrus County**  
Brenda Vorobok  
(352) 726-1731

**Hernando County**  
Janet Dick  
(352) 540-6800

**Lake County**  
Dianne Casson  
(352) 357-1668

**Sumter County**  
Gwen Whitehead  
(352) 793-5900

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## Oral health for pregnant women and babies, cont.



**How Does a Woman's Oral Health Affect Her Baby?** A number of studies have shown a relationship between periodontal disease and preterm, low birthweight babies. Some researchers believe that a chemical found in oral bacteria, called "prostaglandin," stimulates labor. Very high levels of prostaglandin are found in women with severe cases of periodontal disease. Babies who are born too soon are most often of low birthweight and at risk for a number of problems common to premature babies. Maintaining good oral health is an important way for women to safeguard their unborn babies.

**What Can Be Done if Periodontal Disease Is Present?** A periodontist may recommend a non-surgical procedure called "scaling and root planing" to remove plaque and tartar from deep pockets and remove bacterial toxins from the roots. The procedure may reduce the risk of preterm birth and may also help improve the discomforts of pregnancy gingivitis such as swollen, tender gums.

**Oral Health for Babies**  
**When Should Dental Care Begin?** Most pediatric dentists recommend that a

baby have his or her first dental checkup by one year of age. By then, the primary or "baby" teeth have begun to appear. The dentist can check for any problems and inform parents on how to care for their baby's teeth.

**How Can Parents Prevent Tooth Decay?** There are a number of things parents can do to make sure their baby's teeth are protected from decay. Wipe the gums gently with a soft, wet cloth after each feeding and at bedtime. After baby teeth appear, gently brush with a soft infant toothbrush and only a smear of fluoridated toothpaste. Do not put the baby to bed with a bottle of milk, formula, juice or other sweetened liquids, as the sugars in the liquid remain in contact with the teeth for a long period of time and can cause decay. This also can happen during the day if the baby uses a bottle filled with these liquids as a pacifier. Finally, make sure the baby's diet contains fruits and vegetables rather than sweet, starchy, sticky foods.

## Checklist for Care of the Baby's Teeth

### Birth to 6 Months of Age

- Clean gums with a soft, wet cloth after feedings and at bedtime
- Be aware of bottle-feeding habits that can cause decay

### Six to 12 Months of Age

- Consult pediatric dentist after baby teeth begin to appear
- Brush teeth after feeding and at bedtime with a soft infant toothbrush

### Twelve to 24 Months of Age

- Follow recommended schedule of dental visits
- Help the child to properly brush and rinse

## "My Two Front Teeth"

**Baby Teeth** Usually, a baby's first teeth begin to appear between age six months and one year. Most children have a full set of primary "baby" teeth (20 in all) in place by age three. Even though baby teeth aren't permanent, they are as important as adult teeth. Baby teeth help children chew food and speak. They hold space in the jaw for the adult teeth, so that they can grow in straight.

**Teething** When a baby's teeth come through the gums, it may cause the baby to be fussy, sleepless, lose his or her appetite or drool. The gums may be sore or tender. Sometimes a watery sac, called an "eruption cyst," may develop at the point where a new tooth is breaking through. These are usually harmless and should be left alone. There are a number of things parents can do to ease the discomfort of teething:

- Rub the gums gently with a clean finger
- Rub the gums gently with a wet gauze pad
- Offer a clean teething ring or pacifier for the baby to chew on

It's comforting to know that the baby's discomfort is temporary, and that he or she is on the way to a beautiful smile.



## Oral Health for Mothers and Babies WORD SEEK PUZZLE

T P I M O C O P Y Q Y G S I  
H E P L A Q U E V S I O O S  
U R M B O Q P N S N Y P V M  
M I A U K H X R G C P Z D U  
B O T U I G N I H T E E T G  
D D P A W C V O Y N C P T N  
M O L I R I L R O A T W H I  
U N F O T T A A Y N I Q X L  
Z T R I O M A W C R M X Y A  
F A S U I R P R A G U S R C  
F L R R T B D O C B O D M S  
W J P J E T A O F E M B H M  
C W E B A O C T X F N R T V  
F D D Y M S K I S W P G C O

CALCIUM  
DECAY  
DROOL  
GINGIVITIS  
GUMS  
PERIODONTAL  
PLAQUE  
PRIMARY  
SCALING  
SUGAR  
TARTAR  
TEETHING  
THUMB

## Where Can I Get More Information?

**American Academy of Family Physicians**  
Wide range of information, including oral health for pregnant women and babies.  
[www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org)

**American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry**  
Pediatric dentistry website.  
Phone: 312-337-2169  
[www.aapd.org](http://www.aapd.org)

**American Academy of Periodontology**  
Periodontal dentistry website.  
[www.perio.org](http://www.perio.org)

**American Dental Association**  
Information on all aspects of dental care.  
Phone: 312-440-2500  
[www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)

**National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center**  
Information on maternal and child oral health.  
[www.mchoralhealth.org](http://www.mchoralhealth.org)

**National Women's Health Information Center**  
Comprehensive information on health topics for women.  
Phone: 1-800-994-9662  
[www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov)

## Helpful Websites

**Childcare**  
[www.dcf.state.fl.us/chhildcare](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/chhildcare)

**Florida Kidcare**  
[www.floridakidcare.org](http://www.floridakidcare.org)

**Pregnancy**  
[www.pregnancy.org](http://www.pregnancy.org)

**Voluntary Pre-K**  
[www.upkfl.org](http://www.upkfl.org)

**Women's Health**  
[www.4women.gov/pregnancy](http://www.4women.gov/pregnancy)



Central Healthy Start Administrative Office  
1785 NW 80th Blvd., Gainesville, FL 32606  
Tel: (352) 313-6500 | Fax: (352) 313-6515  
www.centralhealthystart.org

If you would like a presentation or more information regarding Healthy Start, contact your local Community Liaison:

Blaire Peterson  
(352) 228-9047  
bpeterson@wellflorida.org



## Healthy Start

is a comprehensive program of maternal and child health services intended to improve pregnancy outcomes and help children get a healthy start in life.

Healthy Start accomplishes this through care coordination and support services that include education and counseling in:

- childbirth
- breastfeeding
- parenting
- nutrition
- mental health
- smoking cessation
- between-pregnancy care

Access to Healthy Start services is free to at-risk women, infants and children and is not based on income.

## Is Thumb-Sucking Bad for Children's Teeth?

Sucking is one of a baby's natural reflexes. Sucking on a thumb, finger or pacifier is perfectly normal and may make the baby feel soothed, secure and relaxed. Most children stop between two and four years of age. When

permanent teeth begin to come in, usually about five or six years of age, thumb-sucking may create crowded, crooked teeth or bite problems. A pediatric dentist can suggest ways to address a prolonged thumb-sucking habit.



## SAY "YES" TO A HEALTHY START FOR YOU AND YOUR BABY!

Healthy Start services cover conception through maternal care for mothers and infancy-to-age-three children. In the early stages of your pregnancy, ask to be screened for Healthy Start services. After your baby is born, be sure to have your newborn screened for Healthy Start services at the hospital or birth center.



### "Baby-bottle tooth decay"

is caused by putting the baby to bed with a bottle of milk, formula or juice. The sugar in the milk, formula or juice stays in contact with the teeth for a long time during the night and can cause decay.