

New Study Shows Dental Treatment During Pregnancy is Safe

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News Releases

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Contact Information:

E-mail: mediarelations@ada.org (Journalists) or [Contact ADA](#) (All Others)

New research from JADA shows that dental treatment during pregnancy is safe.

CHICAGO — It's safe for pregnant women to undergo dental treatment with local anesthetics, according to a [new study published in the August issue of The Journal of the American Dental Association \(JADA\)](#).

"Our study identified no evidence to show that dental treatment with anesthetics is harmful during pregnancy, and yet so many pregnant women avoid going to the dentist," said study author Aharon Hagai, D.M.D. "We aimed to determine if there was a significant risk associated with dental treatment with anesthesia and pregnancy outcomes. We did not find any such risk."

The researchers compared the pregnancy outcomes between a group of women exposed to dental treatment with anesthetics and a control group that did not have treatment. The study shows that exposure to dental care and local anesthetics during pregnancy is not associated with increased risk for major medical problems in newborns. Examples of such diagnoses include cerebral palsy, cleft lip and heart defect. The study also compared the rate of miscarriages, premature deliveries and birth weight between the two groups, and found no reason to associate dental treatment and local anesthetics with increased risk of negative outcomes.

According to the study, previous research shows that many pregnant women do not seek dental treatment, even when a dental problem exists. A mother's oral health during pregnancy is critical, as pregnant women may have increased risk of tooth decay because of increased carbohydrate consumption and difficulties brushing their teeth because of morning sickness, gag reflex and increased gum bleeding.

"It is a crucial period of time in a woman's life and maintaining oral health is directly related to good overall health," said Dr. Hagai. "Dentists and physicians should encourage pregnant women to maintain their oral health by continuing to receive routine dental care and seeking treatment when problems arise."

For more information or to speak with a study author, please contact Natalie Cammarata at cammaratan@ada.org. Hi-res photos and a digital copy of the study are available upon request.

Editor's Note: Reporters are invited to follow the ADA and ADA News on Twitter @AmerDentalAssn and @ADANews.

About the ADA

The not-for-profit ADA is the nation's largest dental association, representing 158,000 dentist members. The premier source of oral health information, the ADA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1859. The ADA's state-of-the-art research facilities develop and test dental products and materials that have advanced the practice of dentistry and made the patient experience more positive. The ADA Seal of Acceptance long has been a valuable and respected guide to consumer dental care products. The monthly The Journal of the American Dental Association (JADA) is the ADA's flagship publication and the best-read scientific journal in dentistry. For more information about the ADA, visit [ADA.org](https://www.ada.org). For more information on oral health, including prevention, care and treatment of dental disease, visit the ADA's consumer website [MouthHealthy.org](https://www.mouthhealthy.org)