

Capitol Dental

Dear Capitol Dental Care Provider,

Over the years, there have been considerable misunderstandings regarding the appropriate dental treatment for pregnant women. The misunderstandings resulted in many practitioners, both OB-GYNs and dentists, believing that dental treatment, and especially radiographs, were unsafe during pregnancy. Many healthy pregnant women were denied needed oral health care or had their oral health care needlessly delayed pending a release from the OB-GYN. Dental care, including radiographs, has been shown to be safe for healthy pregnant women, and hopefully, none of us are unnecessarily delaying care for pregnant women in 2018.

Since 2006, there have been evidence-based comprehensive guidelines published by authoritative sources to clear up any confusion or myths that have led to the misunderstandings. Please review the attached authoritative sets of guidelines: [The Oral Health Care during Pregnancy and Early Childhood Practice Guidelines](https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/0824.pdf) (see article at - <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/0824.pdf>) from the New York State Department of Health (published in August 2006) and easy-to-refer-to excerpts from [Oral Health During Pregnancy and Early Childhood: Evidence-based Guidelines for Health Professionals](https://www.cdafoundation.org/portals/0/pdfs/poh_guidelines.pdf) (see article at - https://www.cdafoundation.org/portals/0/pdfs/poh_guidelines.pdf) from the California Dental Association's CDA Journal (published in October 2010). Both sets of guidelines resulted from interdisciplinary workgroups consisting of dentists and OB-GYNs, they are quite similar, and the information remains the current best practice.

The first few lines of the CDA Journal excerpts sum it up well (emphasis added):

*The role of oral health professionals includes providing preventive services and restorative treatment along with anticipatory guidance for pregnant women and their children. Oral health professionals should render all needed dental services to pregnant women. **Pregnancy is not a reason to defer routine dental care or treatment of oral health problems.** It is not necessary to have approval from the prenatal care provider for routine dental care of a healthy patient.*

It could be argued that, not only should we not defer care for pregnant women, but rather, we should make every effort to encourage pregnant patients to receive care. First, dental care is safe for healthy women. And second, if we want healthy kids in the next generation, we need to break the chain of caries-causing bacteria transmission from mother to child. The best way to break that chain is during pregnancy by improving oral hygiene and addressing dental disease and the bacteria that cause it.