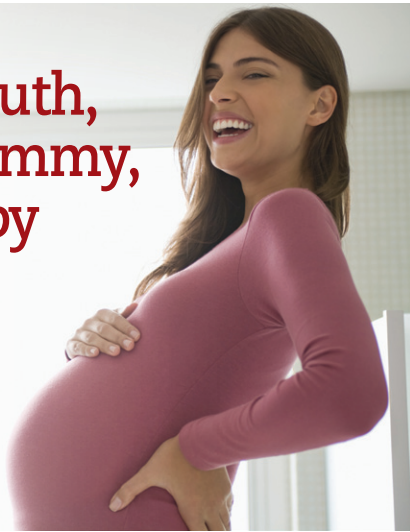


# PORT WARWICK DENTAL ARTS

CENTER FOR COSMETIC DENTISTRY AND DENTAL MEDICINE

## Healthy Mouth, Healthy Mommy, Healthy Baby



If you're planning on starting a family, chances are you already know that you should see your doctor for a checkup and avoid things like smoking and consuming alcohol while pregnant. But there is one other key thing you should do before getting started—visit your dentist. ***What is periodontal disease and is a dental visit really critical to good health?***

Periodontal disease is a common and challenging bacterial infection that affects the gums and the bone supporting the teeth. **It can also affect conception and a healthy pregnancy and baby.** Alarmingly, scientific research shows that up to 80 percent of the adult population has some level of periodontal (gum) disease and only about 10% know they have it.

***Should men also be concerned about periodontal disease?***

Fathers-to-be, you're included in the equation. A 2013 study published in the Journal of Sexual Medicine showed that 68% of men with periodontal disease had low or zero sperm counts and/or diminished sperm quality/mobility. **Periodontal disease has also been shown to contribute to a three-fold increase in erectile dysfunction, according to the Journal of Clinical Periodontology, 2012.**

***How dangerous is periodontal disease?***

Bad breath and bleeding, swollen and/or recessed gums can be some of the first signs of periodontal disease, but may not be obvious until the middle to late stages of the disease. **If left untreated, the disease can lead to bone loss in the jaw, more serious gum abscesses ("gum boils"), loose teeth and even tooth loss.** Most of all, the health of the entire body is at risk when periodontal disease is present.

Periodontal disease can wreak havoc on the body. What's worse, periodontal disease is highly contagious and can be transmitted via mouth-to-mouth kissing or by sharing food and/or drinks. Gum disease is an inflammatory disease, which is why it is so destructive

to every organ and cell in your body (and your developing baby). So it's important for both partners to get checked—and treated—even before conception.

In addition to being harmful to your baby during development, periodontal disease can also affect conception. **An Australian study published in 2012 found that women with periodontal disease take an average of two months longer to conceive (seven months) than those without gum problems (five months).**

***What affect can periodontal disease have on my baby?***

Women with periodontal disease during pregnancy may be up to seven times more likely to deliver a pre-term or low-birth-weight baby, according to Dr. Marjorie Jeffcoat. **As the level of periodontal infection increases, so do the risks to mother and baby, such as gestational diabetes, hypertension and pre-eclampsia in the mother and a myriad of complications for the baby as a result of pre-term birth.** The risks of pre-term birth include respiratory distress syndrome, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, decreased lung function, anemia, jaundice, intracranial hemorrhage, malnutrition and congestive heart failure. In the publication *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, February 2010, **Dr. Yipping Han published the first documented case of the stillbirth of a full-term baby who succumbed as a direct result of one strain of its mother's periodontal bacteria crossing the placenta.**

***What if I'm already pregnant? Should I still get checked?***

If you are already pregnant, a periodontal exam is critical because periodontal disease can worsen due to hormonal changes during pregnancy. **Contrary to outdated thought, periodontal treatment during pregnancy is not only safe, it is healthy and important for both you and your child.**

***What are my options if I have periodontal disease?***

Because periodontal disease is such a complex infection, its management requires a multi-faceted approach. There are many steps you can take to avoid gum surgery, loss of teeth and complications in the rest of the body as long as you are under the watchful eye of a dental professional experienced in treating periodontal disease.

**For decades, Dr. Lisa Marie Samaha of Port Warwick Dental Arts has been urging people to understand the direct correlation between good dental health and overall wellness.** Over the last three decades, Dr. Samaha has developed a private practice devoted to comprehensive dental care for the ultimate goal of what she refers to as "Total Body Wellness through Complete Health Dentistry."

***Is it critical to get checked even if I'm not planning a family?***

Even if you're not planning on starting or building a family, an oral examination can reveal signs and symptoms of over 90% of systemic diseases. **"There is a direct link between periodontal disease and the rest of the body," says Dr. Samaha. "Bleeding gums allow for dangerous periodontal bacteria to invade the bloodstream and set up inflammation and destruction throughout the body.** Periodontal disease has been linked to diabetes, heart attack, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, dementia, lung and kidney disease. Periodontal disease has also been associated with many cancers such as pancreatic, prostate, breast, Hodgkin's Lymphoma, multiple myeloma, oral, kidney, lung and colon cancers."

As Dr. Samaha reveals, "It takes a healthy mouth to ensure a healthy body for you and your baby; before, during and after pregnancy."

***Don't take unnecessary risks with your health.***

Planning a pregnancy or not, your overall health starts with healthy teeth and gums. If you are overdue for a dental visit, don't pass up this opportunity to keep your smile bright, your body healthy and your baby safe. Call Dr. Samaha's office today for a periodontal screening and consultation.

 **Port Warwick**  
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