

Great expectations

Dental care for mothers in waiting

When a woman becomes pregnant, she will be concerned about a number of changes occurring in her body. Chances are good that her teeth will be way down on the list, and the changes that arise in her dental health will probably surprise her. However, pregnant women have special dental needs they should be aware of.

For instance, a problem called pregnancy gingivitis shows up in most pregnant women. It's caused by increases in hormones that change blood flow throughout her system. The gums may become puffy and bleed easily. Scrupulous home care can help relieve this phenomenon, which means brushing after each meal and flossing every day to reduce plaque buildup. Antiplaque and fluoride rinses may be recommended as well.

Acids from morning sickness (which may occur throughout the day) can erode the enamel that protects teeth. Rinsing with baking soda and water right after an episode of sickness can help neutralize this acid. If you don't have baking soda available, rinse well with plain water.

Pregnancy tumors may affect some women. Often, these occur when gums are tender from pregnancy gingivitis. These benign growths normally resolve themselves. However, it's important to be aware that they can erupt. Sometimes they interfere with eating or are in uncomfortable spots. When this is the situation, removal may be recommended.

The need for some dental procedures and treatments may be questioned during pregnancy. For example, x-rays will be performed only if there is an emergency. Elective procedures will be postponed until the second or third trimester, or after delivery. Procedures that cannot wait will be scheduled for the middle trimester if at all possible.

We are prepared to handle the special needs of our pregnant patients. We share your excitement as you look forward to the blessed event, and we are eager to have the opportunity to assist you in raising a cavity-free child. If you have any questions about pregnancy and your dental health, don't hesitate to ask.



"I'll take 'Famous Dentists' for \$200"

Zane Grey, once the highest-paid writer in the world, was first a dentist. He was born in 1872 and given the name Pearl Zane Gray. The successful author, best known for his colorful westerns, was the son of an Ohio farmer, preacher, and (you guessed it) dentist.

Zane's dad longed for his son to follow in his footsteps, but first the boy became a crack baseball player who scored a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania. It was there that he first wrote a story about fishing that appeared in *Recreation Magazine*.

After college, Grey (he dropped his first name and changed the spelling of his last name in 1902) began practicing dentistry in New York City. His practice, however, was short-lived. By 1903, he had self-published his first book. It was unsuccessful, but Grey was not easily defeated.

The erstwhile baseball player and dentist went on to publish more than 80 books. Later, he was to see many of his stories come to life in *Zane Grey Theater*. There is a museum that honors him in his hometown of Zanesville, Ohio, and he appeared on a postage stamp in 1972. Quite a famous ending for a man who began his career as a dentist from Ohio.

