Proper Food During the Prenatal Period Is Important to Healthy Teeth of Mother and Baby

ACCEPTED
AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSN.
Council on Foods

Statements in this leaflet have been accepted by the Council on Foods and Nutrition of the American Medical Association

How Teeth Start to Grow . . .

A baby's first teeth start to grow about the seventh or eighth week of pregnancy. Growing teeth are for the most part living tissue and must be nourished as are all other body tissues. Special tooth-forming cells produce the building materials for the teeth. The blood must bring to these cells all the substances needed to make strong teeth and to keep the cells healthy so that they can do their work.

Pulp Cavity . . .

The substances needed for tooth building are contained in the food we eat. They are taken by a special process into the blood which carries them to the tooth-forming tissue. When the tooth begins to take shape a few weeks after it first starts to form, a hollow space called the pulp cavity is left in the center. It is filled with blood vessels and nerve fibers. The blood which enters the pulp cavity must contain a sufficient amount of all the materials needed to promote the normal growth and development of baby's teeth.

Dentin . . .

The pulp cavity is surrounded by a layer of dentin. The cells which help produce the dentin need vitamin C—a food compound — to help them do their work. The dentin, when finished, contains a great many minerals which must also be taken from food. Minerals are put into the dentin of the baby's first teeth about the fifth month of pregnancy. The most important of these are calcium and phosphorus. Vitamin D — another food compound — is necessary in order for the calcium and phosphorus to be taken up by the blood stream in the proper proportions.

Enamel . . .

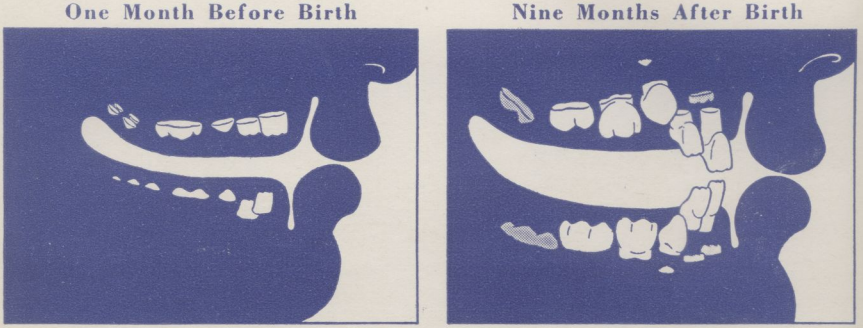
Outside the dentin is a layer of a very hard substance called enamel. The cells which form enamel need vitamin A, especially, in order to do their work properly. If there is not enough vitamin A, the finished tooth may appear rough and pitted. Calcium and phosphorus are the most important minerals needed to make normal enamel. These two minerals plus vitamin D are thus necessary in the manufacture of enamel as well as in the manufacture of dentin.

Enamel is produced by special enamel-forming tissue. For the baby's first set of teeth, this tissue starts to develop as early as the seventh or eighth *week* of pregnancy. Even some of the baby's second set or permanent teeth begin to form before birth—about the sixth or seventh *month* of pregnancy. When the enamel of a tooth is once completed, no more enamel can ever be formed in that tooth.

Jaw . . .

The jaws and gums are important because they hold the teeth firmly in place. The same food substances—calcium, phosphorus, vitamins A, C, and D—that promote normal development of teeth also aid in the formation of strong jaw bones and firm, healthy gums.

BABY'S JAWS AND TEETH



How to Protect Your Teeth . . .

Visit your dentist as soon as you know that you are pregnant. He can examine your teeth, repair them, if necessary, and tell you what to do to keep them in good condition.

Babies need many food materials to help them grow. Before birth, your baby can get them only from you. If you do not eat enough of the right foods to take care of your own needs and to provide him with what he has to have, he will take these materials from your body.

How Baby's Teeth Develop . . .

After birth, baby's own food is very important because his teeth are only partially developed. Teeth and jaws continue to develop all through childhood and adolescence. The breast milk of a mother who is eating a good diet is the very best food for a baby. It contains almost everything the baby needs to help his teeth grow properly. Nursing also exercises the baby's jaws and helps to make a wide, strong dental arch, necessary for straight, regular teeth. Your doctor will tell you how to continue the breast feedings as long as it is best for the baby and when to add other foods, necessary for your child's growth and development.

If you eat the right food before your baby comes, you may be better able to nurse him than if your meals lack important foods. While you nurse your baby, you must continue to eat plenty of these protective foods. In fact, you need even more of some foods—especially milk—during the time you are nursing than you need while you are pregnant.

Your Daily Food Guide . . .

Use this guide in planning your daily meals both before your baby comes and all the time you are nursing him—unless your doctor advises you differently because of some special condition. If you use this guide, you will be sure to eat plenty of all the minerals and vitamins you need for yourself and the baby, too.

MILK

4 or more glasses daily during pregnancy
6 or more glasses daily for the nursing mother
To drink and combined with other foods

VEGETABLES

3 or more servings daily besides potato
1 raw; green or yellow once a day

FRUIT

2 or more servings daily
1 or 2 servings citrus fruit or tomato daily

EGGS

1 or more daily

MEAT, CHEESE, FISH, FOWL, OR LEGUMES

2 or more servings daily
Organ meats often—such as liver, kidney, heart

CEREAL OR BREAD

At least one serving of whole-grain or enriched cereal or bread at every meal

BUTTER

2 or more tablespoons daily

WATER

6 to 8 glasses daily

VITAMIN D

As advised by your doctor

If you eat these amounts of necessary foods you may choose the rest of the diet to suit your own taste. It is best to keep the foods simple with as few rich foods—fried foods, pies, pastries, and concentrated sweets—as possible.

Your Daily Meal Patterns . . .

These patterns will help you follow the "Daily Food Guide" in planning your meals—to help insure your good health and the health of your baby. The family's meals can follow much the same pattern although the quantities of each food and the number of foods may differ. (One serving equals at least one-half cup unless otherwise indicated.)

BREAKFAST

1 serving citrus fruit or tomato juice
¾ cup whole-grain cereal with milk
1 slice whole-grain or enriched bread with butter
1 egg
1 cup milk

NOON MEAL

1 serving protein food (meat, cheese, fish, fowl, legumes)
1 serving green or yellow vegetable (raw or cooked)
1 slice whole-grain or enriched bread with butter
1 serving fruit
1 cup milk

EVENING MEAL

1 serving meat (organ meats often)
1 medium potato (either white or sweet)
1 serving cooked vegetable
1 serving raw vegetable
1 slice whole-grain or enriched bread with butter
1 serving dessert (fruit, custard, pudding, or ice cream)
1 cup milk

Midmorning Lunch

1 cup milk

Midafternoon Lunch

1 serving fruit
1 cup milk for the nursing mother

Evening Lunch

1 cup milk for the nursing mother