



# Perinatal e-News

LA BEST BABIES NETWORK



Healthy Babies. Our Future.  
Presented by First 5 LA



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[www.LABestBabies.org](http://www.LABestBabies.org)

## Issue #22

- **Maternal Infection Increases the Risk of Preeclampsia**
- **Child and Adult Dental Health and Access-Limitations**

### Maternal Infection Increases the Risk of Preeclampsia

Women with a urinary tract infection or periodontal disease during pregnancy may have an increased risk of preeclampsia, according to study published in the January 2008 issue of the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*. Every year preeclampsia - a condition in which high blood pressure is accompanied by protein in the urine - complicates about 5% to 8% of pregnancies.

Key highlights from this systematic review and meta-analysis of prior studies include:

- women with a urinary tract infection during pregnancy were 57% more likely to develop preeclampsia than women without a urinary tract infection
- women with periodontal disease during pregnancy had a 76% increased risk of preeclampsia compared with women without periodontal disease
- no association was found between preeclampsia and untreated or treated HIV infection, malaria, *Chlamydia pneumoniae* (one of several types of the bacteria classified as chlamydia that can cause pneumonia), herpes simplex virus type 2, bacterial vaginosis, or *Mycoplasma hominis*.

Preeclampsia is a leading cause of maternal and fetal complications, including low birthweight, premature birth and stillbirth, and remains a major cause of perinatal morbidity and mortality. In observance of [February's International Prenatal Infection Prevention Month](#), LA Best Babies Network recommends that healthcare providers review current CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines for screening and treating infections in pregnancy. All pregnant women should be screened at the

first prenatal visit for the following:

- urine infection by culture
- syphilis
- HIV
- hepatitis B
- chlamydia
- gonorrhea, if high risk for infection
- bacterial vaginosis

Women who are at increased risk for re-infection or infection should be re-screened for syphilis, HIV, chlamydia and gonorrhea at approximately 28 weeks gestation. All women should be screened for group B streptococcus at approximately 35 weeks gestation.

Learn more

View the Network's fact sheet on "[Genitourinary Infections.](#)"

### **Oral Hygiene in Children and Pregnancy, and Access-Limitations to Obtaining Appropriate Child and Adult Dental Health**

#### *National Children's Dental Health Month*

Infants and toddlers often do not receive proper dental care, either because their primary teeth have not erupted or based on the parents' belief that a baby's teeth will soon fall out allowing the adult teeth to emerge. Proper oral health is important in the prevention of dental infections such as childhood caries (ECC) (an infectious bacterial disease of teeth) and tooth decay. Primary teeth are much more susceptible to tooth decay than adult teeth. Primary teeth are the jaws' foundation for adult teeth and allow infants to chew their foods and develop their speech skills.

LA Best Babies Network joins the American Dental Association during [February's National Children's Dental Health Month](#) in recommending good oral health practices beginning at birth and throughout life. We recommend that parents schedule their child's first dental visit within six months of the child's first tooth eruption, but no later than 12 months of age.

Maintaining good oral health also promotes the health of

expectant mothers and her unborn child. Research shows that children of mothers with poor oral health are susceptible to ECC.

For expectant mothers, periodontal disease (bacterial infections of the gums) is associated with numerous complications. Research shows that periodontal disease is linked to low birthweight, preterm birth and preeclampsia (high blood pressure that is accompanied by protein in the urine) during pregnancy.

*Maternal and Child Health Access (MCHA) Advocates for Oral Health in Pregnancy*

Given the growing evidence of the link between periodontal disease and birth complications, and the benefit limitations for women with "pregnancy-related" Medi-Cal only, Maternal and Child Health Access (MCHA) advocates for expanding access to dental care for pregnant women. MCHA launched a new section on their [Web site](#) with resources on dental care for pregnant women. Healthcare providers are encouraged to purchase a [poster](#) promoting dental care for pregnant women (for a \$10 suggested donation).

*California's Proposed 2008-09 Denti-Cal Budget Cuts*

Despite the importance of maintaining good oral hygiene, many pregnant women go untreated because they lack access to appropriate dental care. Currently, public dental insurance programs are available for low-income individuals through Medi-Cal (California's Medicaid program). Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed budget cuts to the 2008-09 Medi-Cal budget would eliminate funding for Denti-Cal, the state's dental care program for poor, disabled or elderly adults.

The elimination of Denti-Cal would affect over three million adult Medi-Cal recipients, in the state. These proposed cutbacks may result in fewer adults and children obtaining appropriate and timely dental care. As a result, many adults would seek dental care in hospital emergency rooms.

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