

Periodontal bacteria found in amniotic fluid

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A study appearing in the July issue of the *Journal of Periodontology* found bacteria commonly found in the mouth and associated with periodontal diseases in the amniotic fluid of some pregnant women.

The study, which evaluated 26 pregnant women with a diagnosis of threatened premature labor, found the presence of periodontal bacteria, *P. Gingivalis*, in both the oral cavity and amniotic fluid in 30% of the women. Amniotic fluid is a liquid that surrounds an unborn baby during pregnancy. Any disruptions in the amniotic fluid, such as a bacterial infection, could potentially be dangerous to both the mother and baby.

“We evaluated women who were at risk of premature labor,” said study author Gorge Gamonal, Faculty of Dentistry, University of Chile. “We know that there are many reasons a woman can be diagnosed with threatened premature labor, including bacterial infection. Past research has shown a relationship between adverse pregnancy outcomes and periodontal disease, a chronic bacterial infection.”

“While this study’s findings do not show a direct causal relationship between periodontal diseases and adverse pregnancy outcomes, it is still important for women to pay special attention to their oral health during pregnancy,” explained Preston D. Miller, Jr., DDS, President of the American Academy of Periodontology. “Woman who are pregnant or considering becoming pregnant should speak with their dental and health care professionals about their oral health during pregnancy.”

To find out if you are at risk for periodontal diseases take the Academy’s

risk assessment test. A referral to a periodontist, additional information, and brochure samples are available online at www.perio.org , or by calling toll-free (800) FLOSS-EM ((800) 356-7736).

Be sure to also keep in mind your “pocket size” guide to periodontal health; periodontal pockets of one to two millimeters with no bleeding are not a concern but pockets of three and four millimeters may need a more in depth cleaning called scaling and root planing.

Source: American Academy of Periodontology

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