

Celebrating Motherhood, One Smile at a Time

As the Mother's Day celebrations come to a close, the handmade cards are carefully tucked away, and the social media tributes slowly fade from our feeds. But the love, strength, sacrifice, and resilience that motherhood represents continues long after the celebrations end.

Motherhood is one of life's most profound journeys — one that deserves immense respect and recognition every single day. Whether it is a mother-to-be preparing for a new chapter, or a new mum navigating sleepless nights and endless responsibilities, mothers spend so much of their lives caring for everyone around them that their own health is often overlooked.

And one aspect of health that is frequently forgotten is Oral Health.

Oral health is not just about teeth or a beautiful smile. Research continues to show strong links between poor oral health and broader systemic conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. During pregnancy, this becomes even more important, as oral health can also influence pregnancy and birth outcomes.

Yet for many women, oral health slips to the bottom of the priority list during pregnancy and early motherhood. And honestly, that is understandable. Between fatigue, appointments, work, morning sickness, family responsibilities, sleepless nights, and caring for others, finding time for yourself can feel almost impossible.

My PhD research explores oral health behaviours among pregnant women, and one thing the literature tells us clearly is this: many women face real barriers. Barriers to access. Barriers of time. Barriers of trust in healthcare systems. Barriers created simply by juggling the many roles' women carry every single day.

But amidst all this, small daily behaviours can still make a powerful difference.

So, as we reflect on the Mother's Day celebrations, I would like to share one simple message — remember the **BIRD**.

B – Brush twice a day

I – Increase healthy eating habits

R – Rinse with water, especially after nausea and episodes of reflux

D – Dental visits during and after pregnancy

Simple habits. Small moments of self-care. But together, they can go a long way in supporting not only your own health, but also the health and wellbeing of your baby and family.

May this little **BIRD** bring you good health, joyful smiles, and a reminder that caring for yourself is never selfish — it is part of caring for those you love.

To all mothers, mothers-to-be, and new mums, you are seen, appreciated, and deeply valued.

Cheers to a healthy smile, and a healthier life.

With Love,

Minalli

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