

# Health Disparities in the Medi-Cal Population

## Acknowledgments/Contributors



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## Dental Visits During Pregnancy



Improving a pregnant woman's oral health can prevent dental disease complications during pregnancy and decrease tooth decay in her children.<sup>1</sup> A mother's oral health is one of the best predictors of her child's oral health,<sup>2</sup> so addressing oral health care and education early-on has the potential to improve the overall health and well-being of pregnant women and their families.

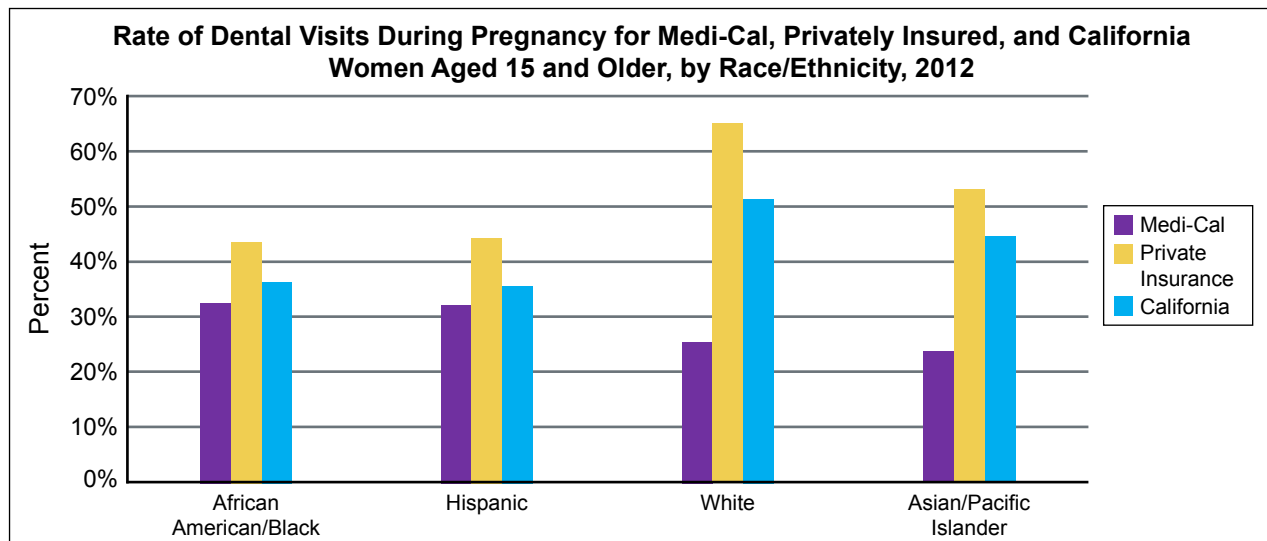


Research has found that poor oral health during pregnancy can lead to adverse pregnancy outcomes, including preterm birth,<sup>3,4</sup> preeclampsia,<sup>5</sup> and gestational diabetes,<sup>6</sup> among others.<sup>7</sup> Engaging pregnant women in oral health care is also important since periodontal disease, commonly known as gum disease, is associated with an increased risk for cardiovascular disease,<sup>8,9</sup> diabetes,<sup>10,11</sup> and respiratory infections.<sup>12</sup> Thus, it is important to provide oral health care to women during pregnancy.

In California, nearly four in ten women aged 15 years and older completed a dental visit during pregnancy (41.9%) in 2012. The rates of dental visits completed for pregnant women enrolled in private health insurance plans in California (55.8%) was higher than those enrolled in Medi-Cal (30.7%), regardless of race/ethnicity (see Figure). Also the rate for the Medi-Cal population varied by race/ethnicity. African American/Black and Hispanic women were more likely to complete a dental visit during pregnancy (32.7% and 32.3%, respectively) than White (25.6%) or Asian/Pacific Islander women (23.9%).



Figure



Source: California Department of Public Health, Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Program, Maternal and Infant Health Assessment Survey, 2012 ([www.cdph.ca.gov/miha](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/miha)).

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