

**CLINICAL LEAD AND TRAINING DIRECTORS' NEWS-LETTER**  
**FEBRUARY 2024- THEME - ORAL CARE/HYGIENE**



Oral care, mouth care and oral hygiene are interchangeable terms for keeping the mouth clean, comfortable and healthy. Mouth care includes cleaning the lips, tongue, roof of the mouth, gums, teeth and dentures and is a very important part of end-of-life care.

Oral hygiene is the practice of keeping one's mouth clean and free of disease and other problems by regular brushing of the teeth and cleaning between the teeth. It is important that oral hygiene be carried out on a regular basis to enable prevention of dental disease and bad breath.

Maintaining a clean and comfortable oral cavity helps patients to recover and reduces the risk of their health declining.

Wherever possible, service user should be encouraged and supported to carry out their own oral care. However, when they are unable to do this maintaining patients' oral hygiene is an essential nursing duty and is considered a fundamental aspect of care (Department of Health, 2010).



## Key points

- ✓ Good oral hygiene has health and social benefits, and will help service user recover from illness
- ✓ staff should carry out oral care for service user who cannot do it for themselves
- ✓ Before oral care is started, the service user's mouth should be assessed
- ✓ Ensure service user privacy during oral assessment and care
- ✓ Service user may need referral to a dental hygienist for specialist advice

## There are many reasons why patients' oral hygiene may be poor, including:

- Inability to carry out oral care, for example due to stroke, arthritis, arm injury, head injury, surgery
- Lack knowledge or motivation
- Lack of access to dental services
- Lack of money to afford equipment for oral care
- Poor diet or reduced fluid intake;(not drinking enough)
- If the service user has swallowing problems.
- Some medications such as anticholinergic drugs and oxygen therapy can cause a dry mouth or an unpleasant taste in the mouth

## What is the procedure for oral mouth care?

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day. Use fluoride toothpaste and a soft-bristled toothbrush



- Floss once daily
- Brush your tongue
- Use an antibacterial mouthwash every day
- Visit your dentist regularly
- Avoid smoking and other tobacco products.

## **What is the staff responsibility in mouth care?**

- Daily assessment
- It is the responsibility of the staff managing the service user's care to assess the oral mucosa and decide on subsequent methods of oral hygiene in consultation with the medical team. The Oral Health Assessment tool under Mobizio can assist in determining the service user's oral health and function.

## **Providing effective mouthcare to service user has a range of benefits. For example, it can:**

- Promote self-esteem and comfort;
- Improve appetite and enjoyment of food and drink, as poor oral hygiene can affect taste;
- Improve social acceptability and social interaction by preventing halitosis.

It might seem like a lot of work to brush, clean between your teeth and rinse, but it's recommended that you brush twice a day for two minutes and take the three full steps (brushing, cleaning between teeth, and rinsing) one time per day, before going to bed. That's just a fistful of minutes per day!

## **How often should oral care be carried out?**

This will have been identified from the oral Health assessment tool and could be daily, twice daily, four-hourly, two-hourly or hourly, depending on the patient's individual circumstances (Dougherty and Lister, 2008)

Good mouth care can reduce the risk of infection and improve in oral intake and maintain weight. Daily mouth care is particularly important for service user who need support or lack in capacity to do things, to prevent deterioration in their oral health.

## The procedure for oral hygiene

- Gain consent (NMC, 2008);
- Assemble equipment – soft toothbrush, toothpaste, clothing protection, receiver, glass of water for rinsing mouth, tissues;
- Ask the patient to get into an upright position if possible or assist them to do this. (If the patient needs to lie flat special care must be taken to avoid choking. The procedure should be undertaken with the patient's head turned to the side, and suction equipment should be to hand);
- Wet the toothbrush head and apply a small amount of toothpaste only. Use a gentle, rotational movement to clean the inner, outer and biting surfaces of the teeth. You may also gently brush the surface of the tongue and the gums;
- If the patient cannot tolerate the use of a toothbrush (for example due to mouth tenderness) foam sticks and mouthwash can be used instead (Dougherty and Lister, 2008);
- Allow the patient to take mouthfuls of water, rinse the mouth and spit into the receiver. Use tissues to dry around the mouth;
- Apply moisturiser to the patient's lips if required. Artificial saliva can be used to alleviate a dry mouth (Dougherty and Lister, 2008).

# HOW TO BRUSH YOUR TEETH



USE A SMALL AMOUNT OF TOOTHPASTE



BRUSH THE OUTER SURFACE USING UP AND DOWN STROKES



BRUSH THE OUTER SURFACE USING CIRCULAR MOTION



REPEAT FOR THE INSIDE SURFACE OF YOUR TEETH



BRUSH THE CHEWING SURFACE USING BACK AND FORTH STROKES



BRUSH THE SURFACE OF YOUR TONGUE

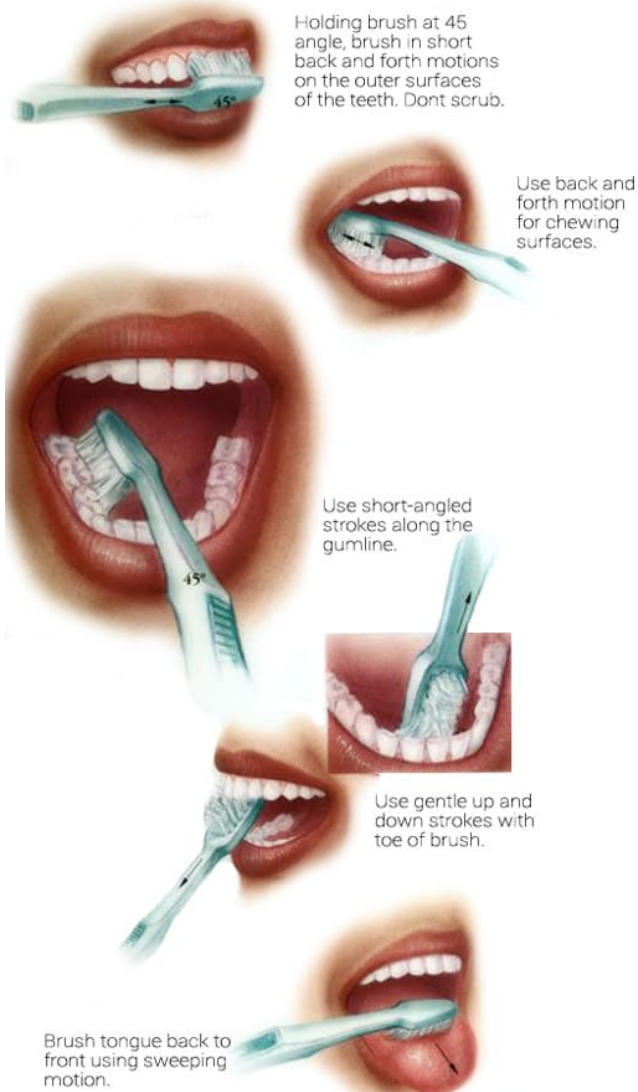


RINSE OUT YOUR MOUTH USING WATER



BRUSH YOUR TEETH TWICE A DAY

### Brushing



### Flossing



### Denture care

- Gain consent (NMC, 2008);
- Assemble equipment – gloves and apron, a denture brush or toothbrush, and denture cleaner or toothpaste denture products are preferable if available as they preserve the condition of the dentures compared with toothpaste (Major, 2005)
- Assess the oral cavity as above
- Remove dentures and partial dentures from the oral cavity
- Clean at a sink

- Pat dry and rinse with cold water before repositioning in patient's mouth (Hickson, 2008).
- Dentures may be soaked occasionally – use specific soaking solution and follow manufacturer's instructions. Always use a dedicated denture container, carefully labelled with the patient's details.



### **Here are some of the most common oral hygiene aids for homecare:**

- Dental Flosses. Dental floss is the most common interdental and subgingival (below the gum) cleaner and comes in a variety of types and flavors.
- Interdental Cleaners.
- Mouth Rinses.
- Oral Irrigators.
- Rubber Tip Stimulators.
- Tongue Cleaners.
- Toothbrushes.

### **Types of dental and oral diseases**

- Cavities. Cavities are also called caries or tooth decay.
- Gum disease (gingivitis) Gum disease, also called gingivitis, is inflammation of the gums.
- Periodontitis.
- Cracked or broken teeth.
- Sensitive teeth.
- Oral cancer.

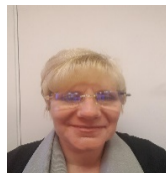
**ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS (MOBIZIO):**

- ✓ SU – Care plan
- ✓ SU – Risk assessment
- ✓ SU- Oral Health Assessment
- ✓ SU- MDT form
- ✓ Fluid Chart
- ✓ Food Chart
- ✓ Weight Record

**ASSOCIATED AUDITS (ACCESS CARE COMPLIANCE):**

- ✓ Infection prevention Audit
- ✓ Provider Quality Audit
- ✓ Facility Visits
- ✓ Care Plan

Thank You,



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Clinical Lead & Training Directors