



# Oral Care

For those without teeth or are tube fed

Many people mistakenly think because they or the people they are caring for have no teeth or are fed via tube, there is no need to clean their mouths. This is simply not true.

Oral and dental diseases can be a contributing factor to pneumonia as the levels of bacteria in the mouth and saliva are increased. If saliva or food/fluid contains these bacteria and enters the lungs (aspiration), it can increase the risk and severity of chest infections. If oral care is not maintained oral and dental disease is more likely and so are chest infections including pneumonia.

## Is oral care for everyone?

Yes. Each individual should have a plan for oral care including anyone without teeth and even those who do not eat/drink orally (ie are tube fed).

## Why is oral care important?

- clears residue food from our mouths and teeth
- reduces risk of chest infection
- maintains comfort and moisture of mouth
- prevents bad breath
- prevents tooth decay



## How often?

- Two – three times a day

## Equipment that can assist with oral care:

- soft toothbrush or foam swab
- a dry clean towel or facecloth
- high fluoride or low foaming toothpaste
- lubrication for the mouth eg KY jelly
- lip moisturiser or balm if required (NB these should not be used for continuous periods as they can reduce moisture in the lips).
- water and/or mouthwash should be used with caution and will be dependent on both the individual's oral control and swallow safety

## How to do oral care/tips:

Sometimes it can be hard to remember to do oral cares.

- to help, do oral cares as part of your daily routine ie after every meal.
- if the person is seated make sure they have good head support.
- If they are in bed, ensure they are in a good upright position, tilt bed and use pillows to help support them.
- remove any food debris from their mouth
- brush gums and tongue using soft toothbrush or foam swab.

If you are having any trouble implementing oral care, please don't hesitate to seek help either from an oral hygienist, dentist or our friendly Speech Language Therapists.

For advice especially for those with disabilities talk to our friendly Speech Language Therapists who are experienced with disabilities.

### Just contact us at Therapy Professionals

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