

Mouth Care without a Battle Worksheet

DVD 1: Module 1 Part 1 Mouth Care Basics (Basic Steps of Mouth Care)

Always wear _____ when providing mouth care and/or denture care.

Mouth care is not merely _____, but a vital part of infection control and health promotion.

Basic steps of mouth care include:

- Remove food from the mouth
- Brush the surfaces of the teeth (inside/outside/biting surfaces)
- Clean between the teeth
- Brush the tongue and
- Apply fluoride protection to teeth (per facility policy)

Remove left over food from the mouth to facilitate brushing teeth without food in the way:

- Use a piece of gauze dipped in water
- Squeeze off excess liquid
- Wrap gauze around gloved finger and
- Feel around cheeks for extra food removing as much as possible with the gauzed finger

Brush the inside and outside of teeth using proper brushing technique and a soft toothbrush (hard bristles can _____ the teeth and _____ gums creating more places for bacteria to grow):

- Hold toothbrush at a _____ ° angle to gum line
- _____ back and forth, then _____ plaque away from the gum line

Brush the biting surfaces of teeth using proper brushing technique and a soft toothbrush. As a review, why should a soft toothbrush be used when providing mouth care? _____

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While brushing the biting surfaces:

- Use _____ back and forth strokes
- Be sure and brush behind the _____ on both the top and bottom because the far back area of the mouth is commonly missed and the site of plaque build-up

Use a smaller brush (end-tuft brush) or a child’s toothbrush to get to hard to reach places or for people who cannot open their mouths wide. If one or the other special brushes are not available, use the resident’s regular toothbrush and do the best you can.

Replace toothbrushes every 3 months or when the bristles become _____ or _____.

Review the terms plaque, calculus, and gingivitis on the vocabulary list
REMEMBER: It is the motion of the _____ and not the toothpaste that cleans teeth – jiggle and sweep, jiggle and sweep. The _____ loosens the plaque and the _____ removes the plaque.

Consult with a health care professional or follow facility policy when choosing a mouth care product; the decision is based on the resident’s ability and needs.
Mouth care products include:

- Toothpaste
- Water
- Listerine
- Biotene rinse and
- Anti-microbial rinse

Review each of the mouth care products listed above on the vocabulary list

Why would it be alright to use water as a mouth care product?

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Simply brushing the teeth does not get in-between teeth. People should also _____ between the teeth using an interdental brush, also called a go-between.

Why is it important to clean between teeth? _____

It is important to not stick a hand in a resident's mouth to floss the teeth. Why?

It is important to clean the tongue because it has bacteria on it which is a common cause of _____ and may have a heavy coating or be discolored.

Two easy ways to clean tongue include:

- Using a toothbrush, dip brush in product, then start with front of tongue and brush forward with _____ strokes, then slowly work way to back of tongue while being careful not to make the resident gag; may also use scraper on the back of the toothbrush if available
- Using a gauze pad dipped in product and wrapped around a cotton swab, rub along the tongue of residents who cannot open their mouths wide

Apply a fluoride product to teeth per facility policy.

When mouth care is complete, perform one last check inside the resident's mouth by gently sweeping the gloved finger through the mouth to check for other food that may remain and observing for irritation of the _____, _____, and _____.

Finally, the nurse aide cleans up after performing mouth care by discarding disposable materials that were used, disinfecting and putting personal supplies away, disinfecting the workspace, and washing hands.

DVD 1 Module 1 Part 2: Beyond the Basics (Dealing with Special Situations)

Denture care – tips for removing dentures

- Upper – grasp with middle and index _____ behind front teeth and _____ outside front teeth; gently rock denture _____ and _____, _____ to _____; once loosened, pull _____ and toward you
- Lower – grasp middle of bottom teeth between thumb and middle finger; gently rock denture _____ and _____; once loosened, pull _____ and toward you
- Partial – grasp the clasps and work gently until the denture is unhooked from the teeth and denture is easy to remove and
- After removal of dentures, put in cup with clean cool water, making sure both top and bottom dentures are immersed

Always check for irritation in the mouth after dentures are removed and then clean inside of the resident's mouth. This must also be done if the resident has no teeth at all:

- Dip cotton gauze in mouth care product and squeeze excess liquid
- Wrap gauze around gloved finger and rub gloved finger inside cheeks, under tongue, and on gums
- Use sweeping motion to remove food (might need to use several sweeping motions if there is a lot of food) and
- While cleaning gums, let the resident spit in a cup when necessary

Denture care – tips for cleaning dentures:

- According to best practices (and per facility policy), never use toothpaste
- Line the sink with a paper towel over drain to prevent damage if dentures are accidentally dropped
- Take lower denture and brush teeth with toothbrush under cool running water, using _____ and _____ technique to remove loosened food and plaque; brush all other surfaces that come into contact with mouth; rinse toothbrush and denture under _____ running water; then place in denture cup
- Take top denture and brush teeth with toothbrush under cool running water, using _____ and _____ technique to remove loosened food and plaque; brush all other surfaces that come in contact with mouth; rinse toothbrush and denture under cool running water; then place in denture cup

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- Ensure both dentures are submerged in _____ water in denture cup after denture cup has been rinsed

Dentures – other important concepts:

- Best practice discourages use of toothpaste to clean dentures (follow policy of facility)
- Adhesive – use as little as possible; if dentures fit _____, adhesive is not needed
- Keep dentures out of mouth for at least 4 hours a day, preferably longer. Why? _____

_____ To be sure dentures are removed daily, it is easiest to take out dentures just before _____; while out always keep them in cool water or denture cleaner. What can happen if dentures dry out? _____ Store dentures away from direct sunlight and heat. Why? _____

Before inserting dentures – check for redness, swelling, irritation of gums where dentures come in contact; _____ may be a sign the dentures are not fitted properly; report raw area or ulcer to supervisor immediately

Other situations:

- People without teeth (edentulous) – mouth care identical with residents with dentures
- Missing teeth – mouth care as describe previously for remaining teeth and exposed gums
- Loose tooth – notify supervisor; if safe and as directed, steady loose tooth with other hand and use short light strokes when brushing; if next to other teeth, hold it steady when cleaning between teeth
- Loose tooth falls out during care – do not replace; apply _____ to area with clean gauze to stop bleeding; and notify supervisor
- Broken teeth – use _____ and not toothbrush; dip swab in cleaning product and rub around broken teeth removing plaque and debris
- Swallowing disorders – provide mouth care _____; do not use toothpaste; use very little liquid in mouth; always dip toothbrush in liquid and dab on gauze pad to get rid of excess water; brush as normal; encourage resident to spit into medicine cup when necessary

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- Tube feeding – treat the same as residents with swallowing disorders

DVD 1 Module 2: Providing Mouth Care in Challenging Situations

Review the terms, dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease, on the vocabulary list
Always remember when caring for a resident with dementia:

- Behavior has a _____
- Behavior is a form of _____ because the disease has robbed the resident of the ability to make words

3 Stages of Dementia

Stage	Communication	Behaviors/Needs
Early	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can express needs and follow simple directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memory problems (may think teeth have already been brushed) • Need step-by step directions (“put the paste on the brush; rinse your mouth; brush your front teeth”) • Needs help but may not know it • Easily upset • Trouble adjusting to new routines (mouth care done same time every day by same person when possible)
Middle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased difficulty understanding • Increased difficulty expressing self • Does not understand what doing and why – becomes agitated • Can understand simple words and gestures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May hit, spit, grab, bite, yell • Need step-by step directions (“put the paste on the brush; rinse your mouth; brush your front teeth”) • Let resident have toothbrush and use hands-on guidance; resident may become more agreeable if he/she can participate in own care
Late	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can’t use words or follow directions • Uses body language and makes sounds to communicate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often need total care • May not open mouth • State what nurse aide is doing • Use touch to demonstrate understanding • Offer reassurance and encouragement

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It is important for the nurse aide to understand what stage of dementia a resident is in because of the need to adjust the approach to mouth care.

The nurse aide should get started with mouth care by first making a _____ with simple, respectful activities towards the resident:

- Knock
- Approach from front
- Say hello and introduce yourself
- Move and speak slowly
- Make eye contact
- Make small talk (“You look nice.”)
- Explain why you are there
- Ask permission

The Resident Refuses Mouth Care

Refusing mouth care – what the nurse aide does in response to the resident depends on the _____, but remember – never force mouth care on the resident and never totally avoid mouth care!

Facts about refusals:

- Occurs more at first. Why? _____
_____ The nurse aide may need to adjust the time to provide the mouth care that the resident wants (resident preference) – some prefer before a meal and some after a meal
- It may work to phase in mouth care by first brushing just the front of the teeth, later brushing the back of the teeth, later cleaning the tongue, and ultimately building up to full mouth care; the nurse aide also may start every other day – just establish some type of routine

Reason: resident does not understand what the nurse aide wants to do (due to being hard of hearing or dementia)

- Talk to the resident at eye level and speak slowly and clearly
- Show equipment and supplies to be used
- Use different words (clean, instead of brush)
- Use gestures to act out the behavior (model opening up your own mouth and brushing your own teeth)

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Reason: resident has a fear of loss of control or pain

- Explain what you are doing and why; give a reason (“Your mouth will feel better.” “Let me get the food from your teeth so you’re more comfortable.”)
- Provide reassurance (“I’ll be careful not to hurt you.” “If anything bothers you, tell me, and I will stop.”)
- For middle stage or advanced dementia, give the resident something he/she likes to hold (blanket, stuffed animal)
- Attend to needs

Reason: bad timing (resident is tired)

- Determine preferred time (morning, bedtime, before or after meals?)
- Come back later

The nurse aide may face other challenges when attempting to provide mouth care to a resident.

The Resident Will Not Sit Down

Reason: resident does not understand

- Put a chair behind the resident’s legs and say, “please sit down.”
- Nurse aide sits down to demonstrate desired behavior
- Get the resident’s attention by facing him/her, making eye contact, and stating name
- Talk with the resident
- Provide mouth care standing up
- Stand up in front of sink with mirror to model past behavior

The Resident Will Not Open Mouth

Reason: resident does not understand

- Touch the cheek, mouth and/or lower jaw to suggest to resident to open mouth
- For late stage dementia, slowly approach the mouth with toothbrush, gently slide brush into the mouth, and begin brushing
- Sing a song which causes the resident to open the mouth

Reason: resident does not want care

- Be patient
- Make small talk

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- Give a reason (“Your mouth will feel better;” “Let me get the food from your mouth so you’re more comfortable”)
- Ask resident if he/she wants to brush teeth by self
- Simply come back later

The good news is, once the _____ is open, it usually stays open and the nurse aide can complete mouth care

The Resident Grabs at the Nurse Aide or the Toothbrush

For the resident with middle stage of dementia who grabs the nurse aide or toothbrush, stop the care and figure out the reason for the behavior.

Reason: resident does not understand

- Speak loudly and clearly
- Repeat self using simple words
- Talk to the resident at eye level
- Use gestures and props

Reason: resident is in pain

- Be gentle
- Talk through the procedure
- Slow down and stop when necessary

Reason: resident wants control

- Give resident toothbrush and guidance
- Use hand over hand technique

Reason: resident is anxious or afraid

- Provide reassurance by explaining what the nurse aide is doing and why (“I will be careful not to hurt you;” “If anything bothers you, tell me and I will stop.”)
- Give resident something to hold (cup, teddy bear, or other similar object)
- Redirect resident by talking, singing, playing music, providing a favorite drink/food, gently touching and massaging shoulders or arms

The Resident Hits the Nurse Aide

Reason: for a resident with middle stage dementia, hitting may be sudden and come as a surprise

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- At the earliest sign of agitation when resident is observed getting upset, stop and see what is going on (most residents will not hit if this is done)
- Redirect resident by talking, singing, playing music, providing a favorite drink/food, gently touching and massaging shoulders or arms
- If resident continues to hit, the nurse aide should stop with mouth care and come back later

The Resident Bites Down on the Toothbrush and Will Not Let Go

Reason: during middle or late dementia, possibly a reflex to chew was stimulated

- Gently wiggle the toothbrush or swab
- Gently rub cheek and massage the jaw
- If the nurse aide feels comfortable, rub along inside of cheek, but outside of the teeth area

The Resident Sucks on the Nurse Aide's Finger, Gauze, or Toothbrush

Reason: during late dementia, a reflex to chew was stimulated

- Explain what you are doing because the resident may think it is food
- Stop if it is a reflex and then start again
- Redirect resident by talking, singing, playing music, providing a favorite drink/food, gently touching and massaging shoulders or arms

Reason: during late dementia, mouth area hurts

- Recognize pain
- Be gentle
- Provide reassurance

The Resident Spits Water on the Floor Instead of a Cup

Reason: the resident associates the cup with drinking and not spitting into

- Provide mouth care near a sink and instruct resident to spit into the sink
- Tilt cup forward under the chin to suggest the resident to spit

Dentures

For residents with early to middle dementia, it is best if the resident can remove/replace dentures; the nurse aide should tell the resident what to do, touch the resident's lip, and finally use patience, flexibility, and good humor.

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Resident needs to have his/her dentures removed from mouth, but refuses

- Use verbal prompts and display patience
- Residents with early dementia – persuade with a simple reason (“A clean denture feels so much better.”)
- Ask when a better time would be to return

Resident needs to have his/her dentures placed in mouth, but refuses

- Use verbal prompts and display patience
- Try touching cheek or lip with denture
- Determine if resident will put in denture and then nurse aide can adjust

The key to providing mouth care without a battle is to understand that challenges are a form of _____.

The nurse aide must remember to be a _____ and individualize _____.

Summary

- Know the person
- Approach from the _____
- Get _____ first
- Focus on the person, not the _____
- Listen for _____ about the person’s needs
- Encourage participation
- Give simple step-by-step _____
- Explain each _____ beforehand
- Be patient and repeat if necessary
- Give _____ feedback and encouragement
- Use _____ touch and reassurance
- Establish a routine with the same caregiver