

ASSISTING WITH TOOTHBRUSHING



Service users are encouraged to brush independently for as long as they are able to do so. It is important to keep a person's independence for as long as possible. Reminding a person to brush is sometimes what is needed.

PEOPLE THAT REQUIRE FULL ASSISTANCE WITH TOOTHBRUSHING

This oral care guide gives practical skill required to deliver good oral care.

TOOTHBRUSHING PROCEDURE

The technique itself, is less important than the effectiveness of plaque removal.

DIGNITY

- Ensure resident's privacy and comfort and explain procedure
- Ideally it is better to carry out brushing with the person sitting down or in bed with the bed at 40-50 degrees brushing from the back/side of the person so that you have better access and visibility.
- Place towel under chin

REMOVE AND CLEAN DENTURES

- Place a flannel in the sink and part fill with cold water to prevent a denture from damage if it is dropped.
- Remove denture/s and brush with mild soap or denture cream and water.
- Place in a named denture pot if cleaning teeth at night and store DRY.

TOOTHBRUSHING

- Apply a pea size amount of fluoride toothpaste to the resident's toothbrush (manual or electric)
- Brush surfaces starting with the outer surfaces in a gentle back and forth motion, 2-3 teeth at a time.
- Get resident to spit out excess but try not to get the resident to rinse unless they suffer from a dry mouth so that fluoride remains in the mouth for longer, helping to protect the teeth.
- Check for any sores or any changes whilst brushing.
- Use interdental aids such as floss or interdental brushes if you have been advised by a dental professional or requested by the resident or next of kin. NB. It is more important to concentrate on brushing the teeth first. To remove as much plaque as possible from the teeth surfaces.

PEOPLE WITH SWALLOW DIFFICULTIES

If the individual has severe swallow difficulties use a dry toothbrush without product. If the individual can tolerate some fluid, consider a damp toothbrush with water or mouthwash. If toothpaste is used apply sparingly to a small, soft headed toothbrush.

Talk to the resident at each stage and ensure that he/she understands what you are doing

FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA -

As people decline with dementia they often have problems with spatial awareness, therefore it helps when greeting the person to place your hand on their shoulder or arm to give the person awareness of where you are. Then stand to the side or behind the person when toothbrushing as you will find this less stressful on your back.

FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE

Fluoride is a mineral and occurs naturally in water in some parts of the world.

Fluoride toothpaste has been shown to help reduce the incidence of cavities and help arrest decay from progressing. Fluoride is added to toothpaste to help strengthen the enamel. A dentist may prescribe toothpaste which has a higher concentration of fluoride –



POSITIONING

If the resident is able, have the person sat up in bed or in a chair.

If seated in a chair, a high-backed chair is preferable. Greet the person from in front and explain what you are doing.

Then stand to the side or behind the person when toothbrushing as you will find this less stressful on your back.

