

Patient information

Effective Mouth Care



What is mouth care?

- Cleaning your teeth, gums and tongue effectively
- Ensuring the mouth is healthy and free from infection

Poor oral hygiene can:

- Affect self-esteem, quality of life and general well-being
- Reduce the sense of taste and affect a person's desire to eat
- Increase the risk of aspiration pneumonia

What are the risks?

- Build up bacteria can result in plaque, tooth decay and gum disease. This can cause discomfort and can lead to abscesses, loss of teeth, mouth ulcers and problems eating and speaking.
- Saliva plays an important part in lubricating and protecting our mouths from bacteria. Dry mouths and lips can result from being nil by mouth, oxygen or caused by some medications.

Frequency

- Individuals who are eating and drinking or on oral trials should have mouth care before and after every meal (3 times a day).
- Individuals who are NBM or receiving oxygen need to have mouth care every 2-3 hours. Their mouths can become very dry; this makes the mouth prone to becoming infected and is uncomfortable for the individual. It is essential that oral hygiene is maintained.

What you need

Small headed medium toothbrush, toothpaste, water, diluted mouthwash, lip salve.

- Place a small amount of toothpaste on the brush (not too much as foam should not be created).
- Use a gentle circular motion on the outside and inside of teeth and gums.
- Finish by brushing the tongue to remove bacteria and freshen breath.
- Afterwards, use lip salve to prevent dry lips.
- It is important to also clean dentures



Nil by Mouth (NBM)

Individuals who are NBM may require a nurse to provide suctioning at the time of mouth care to prevent fluids going onto the chest.

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<http://www.disabledgo.com/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust/main>