

Healthy mouths

How to look after your oral health.



Easy English. Produced February 2008.

This is a summary of the book “A Guide for Carers:
Assisting Clients with Oral Health Care”:

You can ask for the original document. Look at page 13
for contact details.

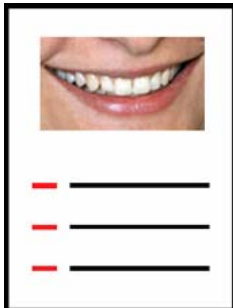
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What is oral health?

Oral health means looking after your mouth. People must look after their whole mouth. The whole mouth includes teeth, gums, tongue and inside the cheeks.



Oral health care plans

- You should have an oral health care plan
- Your plan says how to look after your mouth in the best way, for example,
 - It might be hard for you to open your mouth
 - You might like firm or gentle touch
- You will get help if you need it



Who writes the oral health care plan?

- You
- People who know you well
- Specialists, for example, dentist, speech pathologist and occupational therapist



Who should make the plan happen?

You, your family and your support workers.

You can say who you would like to help you.



What to do before you start cleaning

Time

- Clean your mouth after you eat
- Choose the best times of the day for you. It does not have to be when you go to the toilet, have a shower or get dressed
- Clean your mouth at the same times every day. This is a good habit.



Place

- Choose the right place for you, for example your bedroom or lounge room. It **does not** have to be in the bathroom
- It can be a quiet place
- Keep bright lights away from your eyes
- Do a relaxing activity before you start



Communication

The person helping you can:

- Talk to you
- Show you pictures or objects
- Use touch cues, sign and gestures
- Help you touch the objects



How to sit or stand

- Make sure you are comfortable
- Make sure you sit or stand as straight as possible

Your family and support staff should:

- Read your oral health care plan
- Find out how they need to sit or stand



Tools and products

Your oral health care plan says what tools and products you need. This is a list of examples.

- **Toothbrush**
 - A toothbrush with soft bristles and a small head might be easier to use
 - An electric toothbrush might help you brush your own teeth
- **Toothpaste**
 - Use low foam toothpaste, for example, gel toothpaste
 - Some people do not like toothpaste. People **do not** have to use toothpaste
 - Some people can not spit or rinse. Some people might be able to have a drink of water instead
 - Use swabs and sponges for soft parts of the mouth, for example, your gums. Use a brush for all other cleaning

- **Mouthwash**
 - Some people can use mouthwash
 - Check what mouthwash might be good for you
- **Dental floss holders**
 - Use to help make flossing your teeth easier
- **Mouth props**
 - Use to help you open your mouth

 <p>toothbrush</p>	 <p>toothpaste</p>	 <p>swab</p>
 <p>mouthwash</p>	 <p>dental floss holder</p>	 <p>mouth props</p>



How to clean your mouth

- Brush your whole mouth. This means your:
 - teeth
 - gums
 - top and bottom of the tongue, and
 - inside of the cheeks
- Your oral health care plan will say if you like gentle or hard touch
- Start at the front of the mouth
- Take your time
- Make sure you clean any gaps where food can get stuck
- You can close your mouth to have a rest
- Sick gums might bleed. It can help to use a soft brush. Brush in circles over the teeth and gums



How to clean dentures

- Take out your dentures to clean them
- Brush all parts of the dentures
- Use a hard denture brush and soap
- **Do not** use hot water, detergent or strong liquids, for example, methylated spirits
- Be careful! Dentures can break if you drop them on the sink. Put a plastic container or face washer in the basin when you brush dentures
- You can clean the stains off dentures. Put water and a small amount of vinegar in a glass. Soak your dentures for about 8 hours
- **Do not** try and fix broken dentures. Take them back to the place you got them
- You should take out your dentures **when** you go to bed.
- Clean your mouth and dentures
- Put your dentures in a glass of water while you sleep



People who have meals through a tube

- You need to plan with your speech pathologist, family and support people
- **You must use a brush** to clean your whole mouth.

This includes your:

- teeth
 - gums
 - tongue, and
 - inside the cheeks
- You can use a swab for the soft parts of the mouth



Where can you get more information?

You can ask your local dentist.

You can ask your local community health service.

You can ask a disability support service provider.

You can ask a speech pathologist.

You can ask an occupational therapist.

These people wrote the original book, “A Guide for Carers: Assisting Clients with Oral Health Care”:

- Special Needs Dental Unit, Dental Health Services Victoria
- Domiciliary Dental Unit, Dental Health Services Victoria
- SCOPE Oral Health Project Reference Group
- Health Promotion Division, Dental Health Services Victoria

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