

Mouth Care Without a Battle[®] is an evidence-based approach to person-centered daily mouth care (tooth brushing, care of the gums, and denture care) for persons with cognitive and physical impairment. It combines best practices in dementia care and oral hygiene to reduce the risk of pneumonia and other serious complications and to increase overall quality of life. For more information, visit us online at www.mouthcarewithoutabattle.unc.edu

Caring for People with Teeth

For people with teeth, the goal of care is to reduce gingival inflammation and decrease dental plaque and the risk of developing cavities. Mouth Care Without a Battle[®] achieves these goals by following the steps listed below. The products and vendors used in this program are listed in the blue bar on the back page, but not do imply an endorsement; superscript letters are provided in the instructions below when a product is discussed. Some people may benefit from the use of prescription products, but only when prescribed by a dentist or physician.

Providing care

Step 1. Sanitize work surface with disinfectant wipe^a. Set-up general supplies, which include: non-latex powder-free gloves, lint-free cotton gauze,^b cleaning paste or rinse^{c-f}, cotton-tip applicators^g, one ounce medicine cup^h, fluoride paste or rinse^{c-d}, antiseptic rinse, and hand mirror.

Step 2. Set up individual supplies, which include a soft toothbrushⁱ and interdental brush.^j

Step 3. Clean hands and put on gloves. Place individual supplies on a tray cover^k or other sanitary paper/cloth that sits on top of the work surface.

Step 4. Prepare the cleaning and fluoride pastes and rinses. For pastes, place a pea-sized amount of the paste on the sanitary paper/cloth. For liquids, pour 15ML of rinse into a medicine cup.

Step 5. Dip the toothbrush into the cleaning paste or rinse, removing any excess.

Step 6. Brush the outer (cheek-side) surface of the tooth, then the inner (tongue-side) tooth surface.

Brush upper teeth by jiggling the toothbrush at the gum line, and then in a rotating and downward sweeping manner, brush down. This technique directs the plaque away from the gum line. Brush lower teeth by jiggling the toothbrush at the gum line, and then brushing upward in a rotating manner; again, the goal is to direct the plaque away from the gum line. As a general guideline, begin in the back of the mouth and work towards the front of the mouth. However, this is only a guideline, and care should be personalized. Throughout, the person may spit into a small cup^l or sink if needed.

Using the Interdental Brush



Step 7. Periodically clean the toothbrush by wiping with a towel to remove debris; dip the brush back into the cleaning paste or rinse before continuing.

Step 8. Once teeth have been brushed, dip the interdental brush into the cleaning product. Remove any excess, then gently push the brush back and forth between the teeth, periodically wiping debris from the brush. Repeat for all teeth. Do not force the brush as it may cause gum damage.

Step 9. When possible, clean the tongue using either a tongue-cleaner tool, a tongue cleaner on the back of a toothbrush, or a gauze-wrapped cotton tip applicator that has been dipped in liquid cleaning product.

Step 10. Dip the cotton-tip applicator into the fluoride rinse or paste. Apply a thin layer onto the outer (cheek-side) surface of the teeth first; then, apply a thin layer on the inner (tongue-side) surface, concentrating application at the gum.

Reminders

Replace toothbrush and interdental brush every 3 months, when bristles become frayed or bent, or after the individual has recovered from a virus. Persons with aspiration precautions should not use toothpaste.

Clean up

Rinse toothbrush and interdental brush under running water to remove all debris and product residue. Dip toothbrush and interdental brush into one ounce cup of antibacterial rinse and soak for 30 seconds. Dry both and cover the dry toothbrush with a toothbrush cover^m. Dispose of all contaminated items, and disinfect work surface with disinfectant wipe.

Proper Brushing Technique



Jiggle the toothbrush at the gum line, and then in a rotating manner, brush away from the gum.

Applying Fluoride Paste



Notice: All individuals should receive physician approval prior to beginning any new care regimen. For more information, contact the Mouth Care Without a Battle[®] program offices at (919) 843-8874 or visit us online at www.mouthcarewithoutabattle.unc.edu.

Caring for People with Dentures

For people with dentures, the goal of care is to keep the mouth and dentures clean and disinfected, and to reduce gingival inflammation. For individuals who have a partial denture and some teeth, brush teeth first, using the procedures listed on the other side of this page. Then, for areas with a denture, follow the procedures listed below. Note that toothpaste and fluoride products should be applied only to natural teeth.

Providing care

Step 1. Sanitize and prepare work surface and supplies, using procedures listed on the other side of this page.

Step 2. Remove denture from mouth, and place in a denture cup^a containing water.

Step 3. Dip cotton gauze into medicine cup containing cleaning rinse, squeezing out excess liquid. Wrap gauze around gloved finger and cleanse soft gum tissues—including the roof of the mouth and the cheek area. Be certain to remove all debris and denture adhesive from the mouth. The individual may spit into a disposable cup or sink, if needed.

Step 4. When possible and indicated, clean the tongue using either a tongue-cleaner tool, tongue-cleaner on the back of the toothbrush, or a gauze-wrapped cotton tip applicator that has been dipped in a liquid cleaning product.

Step 5. Use gauze to remove debris and denture adhesive from the denture. Then, hold the denture under running water, and brush with a soft toothbrush. Be sure to remove all debris and denture adhesive from the denture. Without using adhesive, replace denture in the individual's mouth.

Step 6. Clean up and sanitize work area.

Reminders

Dentures should stay out of the mouth for at least four hours each day. Never store the denture in a hot location as it may warp.

Mouth Care & Dementia

Persons with dementia may:

- *Be able to provide their own mouth care.* If so, encourage them to do so, ensuring complete care is received.
- *Need some assistance.* You can help by setting up for them, helping them hold the toothbrush, and prompting them along the way.
- *Be unable to provide their own mouth care.* In this case, provide care using the instructions on this sheet. Encourage independence and allow the person to take part in their care as much as possible.
- *Be resistive to mouth care.* In this situation, use a positive, personal approach to care. Provide verbal cues (e.g., tell the person what you are going to do prior to doing so) and physical cues (e.g., gently touch the lip with the toothbrush prior to attempting care) to facilitate care. Consistency is key, so provide care each day.

Always Store Denture in Water



Products and Vendors *

- a. CaviWipes Towelettes
www.henryschein.com
- β. Non-woven gauze sponges, 4x4, 4-ply
www.medstore101.com
- γ. Sensodyne Pronamel
www.cvs.com, www.target.com
- δ. ACT Total Care Dry Mouth
www.cvs.com, www.target.com
- e. Listerine Total Care Zero
www.cvs.com, www.target.com
- f. Biotene PBF Oral Rinse
www.cvs.com, www.target.com
- g. Cotton-tip applicator, 6"
www.henryschein.com
- h. 1 ounce plastic cup
www.mednetdirect.com
- i. Aquafresh Gel Flex Toothbrush, Soft
www.aquafresh.com, www.henryschein.com
- j. GUM Go Betweens ULTRA Interdental Cleaners
www.gumbrand.com
- k. Tray cover mini, 5 x8
www.henryschein.com
- l. 5 ounce cup
www.henryschein.com
- m. Acclean toothbrush cover
www.henryschein.com
- n. Denture bath cases
www.medicalartspress.com



* The products and vendors listed here are not intended to be all-inclusive. Specific names are provided only as examples and do not imply endorsement.