

Mouth Care Without a Battle

Individualized Mouth Care for Persons with Cognitive and Physical Impairment

Care Strategies for Resistive Behaviors

Behavior Symptom	Person-Centered Techniques
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know the resident• Approach from the front and make gradual movements• Smile and maintain eye contact• Ask permission before starting• Speak slowly; use simple phrases• Ask one question at a time• Focus on the resident rather than the task• Explain each step• Complete as many steps as possible• Give reasons for what you're doing• Be patient, repeat yourself as appropriate• Give positive feedback and encouragement
Resident Refuses Mouth Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Figure out why the resident is refusing (e.g. bad time, pain, fear) and change approach accordingly<ul style="list-style-type: none">- If pain, check for broken teeth or infection and notify nurse- If fear, provide comforting object or reassurance and rub shoulder/arm• Come back later when the resident is more receptive to care• Talk with the resident before starting mouth care• Develop a routine (e.g. every day at the same time with the same caregiver)• Provide a reason (e.g. let me get the food out of your teeth so you'll be more comfortable)
Resident Won't Open His/Her Mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell-show-do techniques to promote understanding• Touch the mouth, cheek, or jaw with the toothbrush to prompt to open• Gently insert toothbrush to clean front surfaces of teeth• Gently pull down on lip or chin• Ask the resident to say "ah"• Ask resident to open mouth and then open your mouth (modeling the behavior)• Take the resident to the bathroom sink (the mirror and sink may help cue them to brush teeth)• Sing with the resident• Be patient, try small talk, provide a reason for mouth care• Come back at a time when the resident might be more responsive

Mouth Care Without a Battle

Individualized Mouth Care for Persons with Cognitive and Physical Impairment

Care Strategies for Resistive Behaviors

Behavior Symptom	Person-Centered Techniques
Resident Resists Care by Grabbing, Holding, or Playing with an Object	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hand the resident the toothbrush and invite to brush• Reassure and rub shoulder/arm to help relax• Distract or redirect by pausing, singing, talking• Hand the resident an object to hold and keep hands busy• Use a second caregiver to talk, reassure and/or hold resident's hands during mouth care• Gently hold the resident's hand and talk
Resident Bites Toothbrush	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gently wiggle the toothbrush and ask to open mouth• Insert a smaller brush to work around the toothbrush• Gently rub cheek to relax jaw muscle• Slide finger along the inside of the cheek and massage jaw
Resident Shows Physical or Verbal Aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distract the resident (e.g. singing, dancing, conversation, watching TV)• Stop and check for pain; come back later• Pick another time of day when the resident is calmer (e.g. early morning while sleepy)• Try another caregiver with whom the resident is comfortable• Use a second caregiver to talk, reassure and/or hold resident's hands during care• Check for broken teeth, sore spots, infection (notify nurse)
Resident Has Trouble Swallowing, or Cannot Spit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a small amount of antimicrobial rinse• Use only a pinhead of paste• Provide care sitting up• Have resident tilt head forward and put a cup under the mouth to encourage spitting• Avoid swishing
Trouble Removing or Reinserting Dentures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the resident to remove or reinsert dentures• Ask to open mouth so you can remove/put in their dentures• Gently touch the mouth or cheek to prompt to open mouth