

CARERS INFORMATION SHEET 1 - TOOTHBRUSHING INSTRUCTIONS

Good oral hygiene improves general health and well being and reduces the risk of chest infections. Toothbrushing removes harmful dental plaque from the teeth and gums and should be undertaken twice daily, or once daily as a minimum standard.

- Prepare equipment;

- Small toothbrush and toothpaste with a Fluoride content of at least 1450 ppm (parts per million). A higher dose fluoride toothpaste may be recommended e.g. Duraphat 2800³⁹
- Waste receiver e.g. disposable kidney dish
- Mirror if available
- Use of light e.g. pen torch is very beneficial when observing and cleaning the mouth

- Wash and dry hands before and after carrying out any mouth care and wear appropriate personnel protective equipment – gloves, apron, and eye protection
- Explain the procedure to the patient and ensure he/she is in a comfortable position, preferably with some head support.
- Remove any dentures and place in water.
- Apply pea-sized amount of toothpaste onto toothbrush.
- Use the toothbrush and toothpaste to remove 'plaque' (soft debris) from the teeth and gums. It takes at least two minutes to ensure all areas are cleaned thoroughly.
- Place toothbrush at 45 degree angle to gum margin i.e. where tooth and gum meet.

- Start with upper teeth; remove plaque by cleaning all teeth; front and back. First brush the outside surfaces of the upper teeth, then all inside surfaces, finishing with a gentle scrub action on the chewing surfaces of the back teeth. Repeat the same procedure on the lower teeth.
- It is important to brush gums even if they bleed. If there is no improvement after two weeks seek dental advice.
- Finally, gently brush the tongue, cheeks and palate. This is especially important for residents with no remaining natural teeth who do not wear dentures.
- Allow and assist the patient to spit out and rest as required
- Follow denture cleaning procedure before returning any dentures to the mouth
- After use toothbrushes should be rinsed in water, excess shaken off and stored to 'air dry'.
- Dispose of all equipment used, appropriately.
- Wash and dry hands at end of procedure.
- Replace toothbrush every three months or sooner if bristles become worn.
- *Pink foam sticks should not be used for cleaning teeth as the foam head may become damaged or detached whilst in the mouth and cause choking.

If the patient's condition changes e.g. changes to the consistency of their food, or their swallow deteriorates necessitating Enteral Feeding (Peg Feeding) a dentist should reassess the resident's oral health.

***Alert** - Pink Foam Sticks – available at www.mhra.gov.uk/ - ref MDA/2012/020