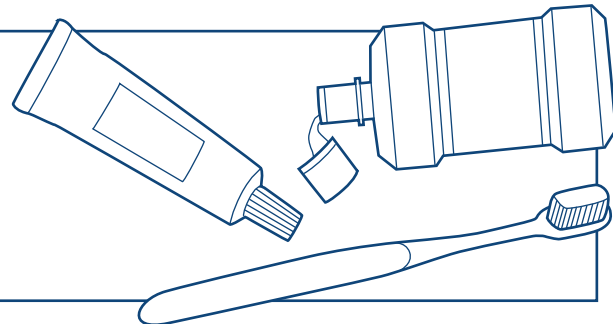


MAINTAINING A HEALTHY MOUTH:

A short guide for home care workers

Keeping the mouth and teeth clean is very important for people living with dementia. They can develop diseases, pain and not be able to eat and speak. They may find it difficult to go to the dentist and get treatments.



DAILY CARE:

- **If the person wears dentures, remove them in order to brush teeth and/or clean dentures**

Use the solution provided.



- **Brush at least twice daily for about 2 minutes**

They may even take 10 minutes, but try to give them as much time as they need. If teeth and the mouth are not cleaned daily, problems may arise.



- **If the person cannot brush for a long time, then brush different parts of the mouth in shorter sessions**

E.g. upper teeth first, lower teeth later or left side first, then right side later.



- **Brush last thing at night if possible and on one other occasion**

In this way, the fluoride in the toothpaste continues to protect teeth while asleep.



- **Use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste**

This will help to keep mouth and teeth clean.



- **Clean gums, tongue and all surfaces of the teeth**

Try to use other cleaning aids like interdental brushes to reach spaces between teeth.



- **Check for bleeding**

Bleeding indicates that the gums are unhealthy and they need to be brushed gently but thoroughly. If you continue to notice bleeding, the person must see a dentist.



- **Encourage the person to spit out after brushing**

No need to rinse away the toothpaste. The fluoride will continue to work on the teeth.



- **If there are problems, try different techniques**

You can try 'watch-me', hand-over-hand, toothbrush adaptations.



- **Check if toothbrush (heads for electric ones) and toothpaste need replacing**

Change the toothbrush at least every 3 months and find out who should get a new one.



- **Consider if different mouth care products might help - ask a family member or your manager**

E.g. manual/electric/three-headed toothbrush, interdental brushes, floss, mouthwash, no foaming/low foaming toothpaste.



- **If possible, talk to dental professionals and other practitioners involved in the person's care**

Community or Admiral Nurses, speech and language therapists and so on can give tips and advice.



REPORTING:

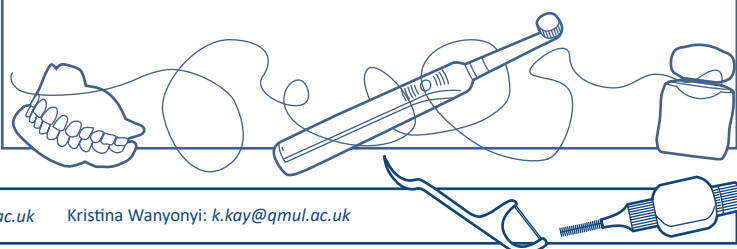
- **Make a note of when mouth care was completed**

Let the family and/or care manager know if, for whatever reason, it has not been done for 3 days.



- **Check for signs of discomfort or pain**

If the person is not communicating well, watch their face, or ask their family member to look out for this possibility. Try using pictures to help communication. Talk to someone about arranging a visit to the dentist or GP.



Research Team: Dia Soilemezi: dia.soilemezi@port.ac.uk Jill Manthorpe: jill.manthorpe@kcl.ac.uk Kristina Wanyonyi: k.kay@qmul.ac.uk