

Mouth Care Helpers for Caregivers

See *Product Suppliers Fact Sheet* on where to purchase mouth care helpers

<p>LIP CARE</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lubricate lips with water-based products before and after mouth care (e.g. KY-Jelly, Labello Stick, Oral Balance) Avoid: petroleum-based products (e.g. Vaseline, Lypsyl, or Chapstick) which may increase the risk of inflammation/infection, aspiration pneumonia; clog tubes; and are flammable (<i>danger during oxygen therapy</i>)
<p>MOUTH PROPS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helpful for the caregiver and for residents who are clenching/biting, are uncooperative, or have difficulty opening Consider using an Open Wide disposable mouth prop: can be labeled, cleaned & reused until signs of wear are evident <p>How to make a temporary mouth prop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrap 2-3 tongue depressors with several gauze squares, secure in place with tape, OR Fold/roll up washcloth and insert between back teeth <p>How to use a mouth prop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wiggle in between back teeth; don't insert between front teeth as they can chip/break Turn mouth prop so that wider dimension is between resident's back teeth, allowing more room to brush To reposition, turn mouth prop to narrower dimension and slide around to other side; turn again so that resident's back teeth rest on wider dimension
<p>3-SIDED TOOTHBRUSHES: COLLIS CURVE™ & SURROUND®</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively removes plaque by brushing 3 surfaces at the same time: the inside, outside, and chewing surfaces ~ cuts brushing time in half ~ a bonus for caregivers As effective as a regular manual toothbrush Especially helpful for uncooperative residents; partner with mouth prop if needed Order a "soft" adult size Collis-Curve toothbrush or a "regular" (STB-1) Surround toothbrush and replace as you would any other toothbrush <p>How to use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press bristles down over bottom teeth; up over top teeth to help toothbrush hug the tooth and reach gums Use short back and forth horizontal strokes Tilt brush from side to side to help bristles reach gums on both inside and outside of teeth
<p>CLEANING BETWEEN TEETH</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those who will cooperate, clean in between their teeth daily using a product that works for you and them For tighter spaces filled with gum tissue, use floss in a floss holder; floss threaders allow you to insert the floss under bridges For larger spaces or for sides of teeth next to gaps use a proxabrush, a small cone-shaped bristled attachment & handle; use an in and out horizontal motion; never force in spaces where it doesn't fit; replace brush when it shows wear Note: Avoid cleaning between teeth for residents with an inadequate platelet count
<p>TONGUE CLEANING</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bacteria on the tongue, particularly the back 1/3, is a major cause of bad breath Daily cleaning with a toothbrush works well, but using a tongue cleaner works even better! <p>How to clean the tongue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have resident stick out tongue, using gentle pressure, scrape or brush the top surface of the tongue from back to front 4-5 times For tongue cleaners, rinse and air dry; replace when worn/cracked
<p>POWER TOOTHBRUSHES</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some models are proven to be as or more effective than manual toothbrushes Especially helpful for those with limited dexterity and for caregivers Recommend Oral-B models, Sonicare, Interplak; all are rechargeable; replace toothbrush heads as needed. All Oral-B and Sonicare models are proven to be more effective than manual toothbrushes. Use as directed by manufacturer

<p>TOOTHBRUSH HANDLE ADAPTATIONS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For residents with manual dexterity problems; products designed to make self-care easier: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build-up the toothbrush handle by inserting it into cylindrical foam (cut to desired length) or using a bicycle handle, foam ball, rubber ball, tennis ball, tin foil, rubber bands, or wax Bend/mold the toothbrush handle; soften under hot tap water and bend to shape Tip for denture cleaning: attach a nail brush to counter with suction cups; move denture across the nail brush to clean
<p>SPECIAL TOOTHPASTES</p> 	<p>Non-Foaming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not contain sodium lauryl sulfate Recommend when providing care for those with swallowing or feeding problems, for those with dry mouth, or when using with chlorhexidine (prescription mouthwash) Suggest: Biotene toothpaste or Sensodyne Pronamel <p>Desensitizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend for residents with sensitive, exposed roots of teeth Try for 4-6 weeks; if not effective, discontinue; consult with oral health professional Suggest: Sensodyne-F products, Crest for sensitive teeth, etc.; if one doesn't work, try another <p>Tartar-Control:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend for residents who quickly build up hard deposits/tartar which promotes gum disease Use as regular toothpaste; discontinue if resident reports burning sensation Suggest: CDA approved tartar control toothpastes (<i>Crest, Colgate, etc.</i>)
<p>FLUORIDE</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proven cavity-fighter - strengthens weakened areas of enamel on teeth Found in most toothpastes and some over-the-counter rinses (0.2% Opti-Rinse by X-PUR, among others) Available over-the-counter in higher concentration toothpaste (Prevident 5000+, for those at high risk of tooth decay; contains five times more fluoride than regular toothpaste)
<p>CHLORHEXIDINE</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prescription anti-microbial mouthrinse that effectively controls bacteria in the mouth Caution for dry mouth: request alcohol-free chlorhexidine rinse (i.e. Paroex) Prescription will indicate suggested frequency of use To be effective, use this sequence: Step 1) provide daily mouth care. Note: If brushing with a toothpaste that contains sodium lauryl sulfate (<i>most toothpastes</i>), wait 30 minutes before applying chlorhexidine, Step 2) swish or apply to teeth with an ultra-soft toothbrush (<i>avoid eating/drinking for 30 minutes</i>) Caution: May temporarily stain teeth and alter taste; recommended for short-term use only
<p>DRY MOUTH PRODUCTS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specially formulated to increase comfort and decrease the risk of tooth decay and infection for those with dry mouth, product examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIOTENE Products contain natural antibacterial enzymes and moisturizers which help comfort and maintain a healthy balance in the mouth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toothpaste (<i>sodium lauryl sulfate free</i>), Mouthwash (<i>alcohol-free</i>), Oral Balance Mouth Moisturizing Gel or Spray, Dry Mouth Gum (<i>sugar-free</i>) X-PUR Products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mints, lozenges, Oracoat Xylimelts (dry mouth patch) Available from: Health food stores, London Drugs, Shoppers Drug Mart SAGE Products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moist Plus mouth moisturizer
<p>SUCTION TOOTHBRUSHES</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For debilitated residents or those with swallowing difficulties, suction toothbrushes can be attached to existing suction units, making a tough job easier Cleanly evacuates saliva, dental plaque, fluids, and food debris through toothbrush head Suction power controlled by finger placement on air hole Plak-Vac System – toothbrush can be used for ~ 3 months; brush with a non-foaming toothpaste or dip brush head in diluted alcohol-free mouthrinse Sage Suction Oral Brush – package of 2 disposable toothbrushes (<i>am and pm</i>) & mouthrinse