



ORAL INSPECTION... look for anything out of the ordinary as part of your routine assessment for residents!

Supplies:

- Exam gloves
- Flashlight
- Tongue depressor
- Face cloth/gauze square
- Mouth prop if needed

WHY CHECK?

- **Catch** a dental problem before it becomes serious
- **Adjust** daily mouth care to meet resident's needs
- **Promote** comfort and health
- **Identify** potentially life-threatening infections or cancer

What to LOOK for:

- Lumps, bumps, swellings or sores on the face, lips, neck, or in the mouth
- White, red, or dark patches
- Spontaneous areas of bleeding
- Numbness, pain, or loss of feeling on face, neck, or in the mouth
- Dry mouth, burning sensation
- Trouble swallowing/hoarseness
- Loose or broken teeth; lost fillings
- Broken or ill-fitting dentures; denture sores
- Visible plaque, calculus (hard deposits), or food debris
- Red, swollen gums

Note: not all problems are painful

Be sure to ask resident if they have any concerns

1. Inspect the Face and Neck:

- Look to see if both sides are the same
- Feel the centre, right and left sides of the neck, and under the jaw for any bumps or lumps
- Check to see if the resident can swallow comfortably

2. Inspect the Mouth:

- Lips and Gums:
Look at the lips closed & open. Look at the inside of the lips by pulling the lower lip down and the top lip up.
Look at the gums for bleeding, redness, or infection (abscess). Healthy gums are coral-pink in colour; persons with darker skin will have pigmented gums.
- Cheeks:
With the mouth open (*may need a mouth prop*) retract each side of the cheeks, check the inside of the cheeks. Look for any signs of dryness.
- Roof of the mouth:
Have the resident tilt his/her head back and say "Ahhh". Check the hard and soft palate and the throat.
- Floor of the mouth:
Have the resident touch the tip of their tongue to the roof of their mouth. If unable, use a moistened gauze to lift the tongue. Check the floor of the mouth and the underside of the tongue.
- The tongue:
While holding the tongue, check the top surface. Pull the tongue to the right and the left, looking carefully at each side of the tongue.
- The teeth:
Look for any obvious problems.

3. Record & Follow-up:

- Monitor & modify
Record red, bleeding gums or visible soft or hard deposits in the resident's chart. Modify daily mouth care to improve health.
- Monitor & refer if required
Record the location, size, color and history of any abnormal finding in the resident's chart. Discuss with nursing supervisor.
- Refer to dental professional
Some findings require immediate attention, such as a very loose tooth, toothache, infection, or suspicious area.
Book other dental concerns promptly (ex: fillings or a professional cleaning)
- Annual dental check-up
Ensure all residents, including those without teeth, have an annual dental exam; even if everything *appears* normal.
Refer any sore, lump, or unusual patch that does not heal within 2 weeks

