

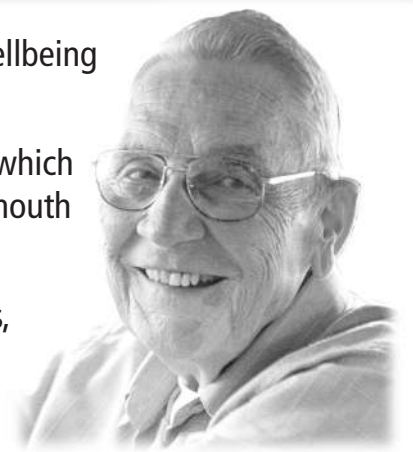
# Oral Care for Persons in Residential Care

Like nutritious food and regular bathing, daily oral health care is extremely important to the health and wellbeing of elder residents.

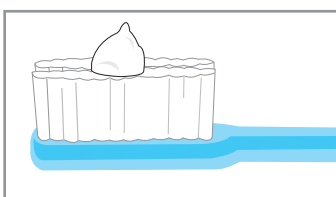
Cavities and gum disease, which can result in pain and tooth loss, are both caused by plaque, a sticky film which forms on all surfaces of the mouth. Daily oral care, including brushing the teeth, dentures, the lining of the mouth and the tongue, reduces plaque and promotes oral health.

Having a clean, healthy and pain-free mouth can reduce an elderly person's risk of serious health problems, such as aspiration pneumonia and cardiovascular disease, and can also help control diabetes. It also promotes chewing, enjoyment of meals, clear speech, sound sleep, an attractive appearance, self-esteem and overall health and comfort.

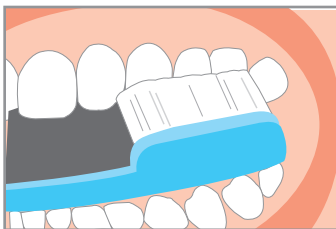
Residential staff members play a central role in assisting or providing residents with daily oral care, but families and friends are strongly encouraged to participate too. A group approach can help prevent oral disease and the health problems it can bring. This can greatly enhance the quality of life for elder residents.



## Toothbrushing



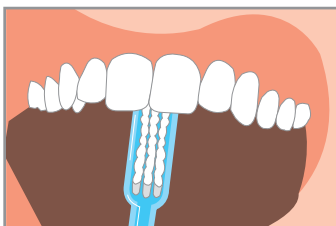
Wet the toothbrush with water. Apply a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.



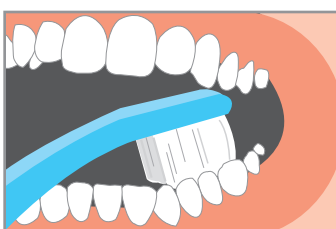
Place toothbrush at a 45 degree angle to the teeth. Gently move the toothbrush back and forth with short strokes.



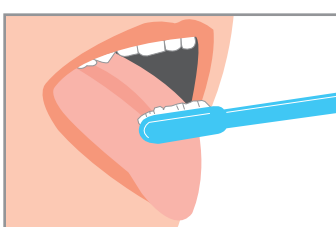
Brush inside and outside of both upper and lower teeth.



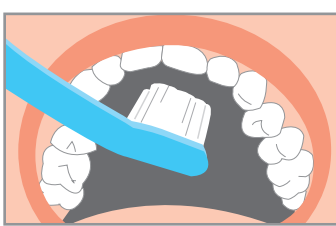
Hold toothbrush in vertical position to clean insides of upper and lower front teeth.



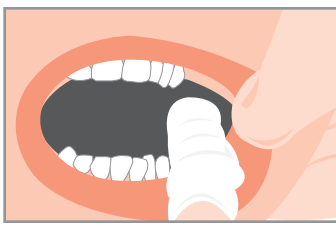
Brush the chewing surfaces.



Brush tongue from back to front five times.

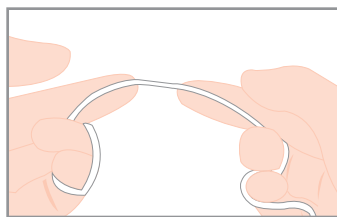


Use the toothbrush to gently massage gums and clean the lining and roof of the mouth.

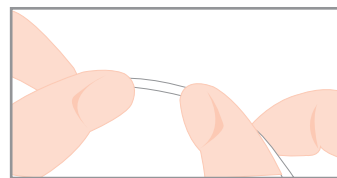


Rinse mouth with water. If unable to rinse or spit, use a moistened gauze to wipe out the mouth.

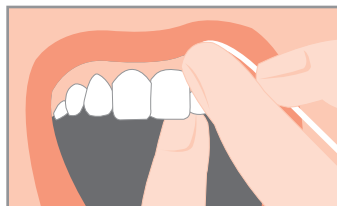
## Flossing



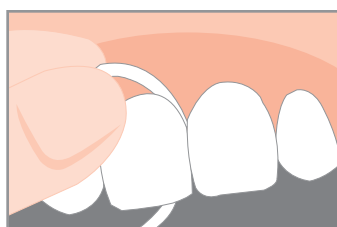
Start with an arms length of dental floss. Wrap around middle fingers on both hands.



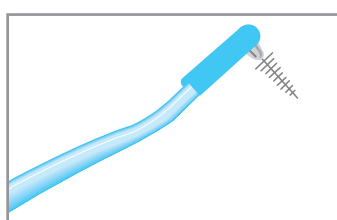
Grasp floss with forefinger and thumb with 2 cm of floss between them.



Use see-saw motion to gently pass floss between the teeth.



Wrap the floss around the tooth in a "C" shape and gently move it up and down. Repeat on the adjacent tooth surface.



Proxabrushes are also available to clean larger spaces between teeth.

## Denture Care



Remove complete dentures by placing two fingers behind front teeth and gently rocking to break the seal.



Partial dentures are removed by placing fingers over the clasps and pulling.

Clean over water-filled sink. Place a small amount of liquid hand soap on the denture brush and brush all surfaces, including the clasps on a partial denture. Rinse well with water.

Store dry in a labelled denture cup.

To re-insert dentures, wet first with water to prevent discomfort.

**LABELLING DENTURES:** Identification of removable dentures with the elder resident's name significantly reduces the incidence of denture loss in long term care residences. To explore this option, please consult a dentist.

## TOOTHBRUSH CARE

Rinse toothbrush, dry with a paper towel and store in a designated container.

If an anti-bacterial fluoride mouth rinse has been recommended, family and friends may wish to consult staff regarding its use.

Standard toothbrushes can be modified and adapted for patients who have difficulty controlling hand, arm or shoulder movement:

- enlarge the handle with a tennis ball, sponge foam or bicycle grip
- lengthen with a stick or rod
- attach to the hand or arm with elastic or Velcro straps or hand brace
- bend the toothbrush handle or
- use an electric toothbrush (for a person who cannot manage fine movements)