



Caring for Smiles – A Guide for Carers

NHS
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Scotland

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SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Cleaning the mouth, teeth and dentures (oral care) is part of personal care.

Everybody should clean their teeth or dentures at least twice a day.

Cleaning the mouth, teeth or dentures helps make sure older people:

- are comfortable
- are able to eat, drink and talk
- are free from pain
- feel better about themselves.

Encourage and assist older people to clean their own teeth or dentures. If they are not able to do this, then you can help them.

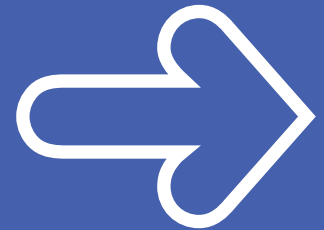


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Speak to your line manager to report a concern or if you:

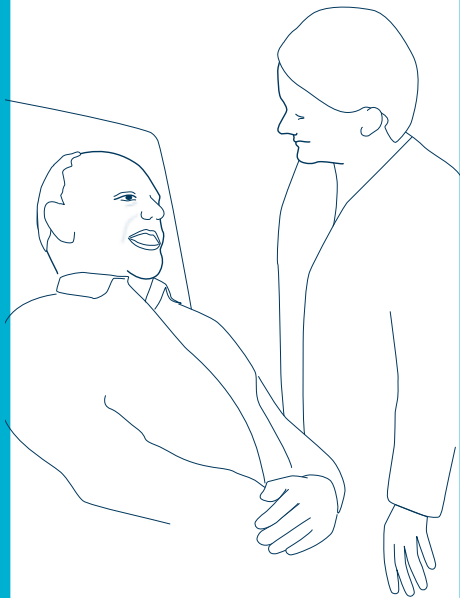
- feel the older person needs to see a dentist or
- feel the older person is too unwell for you to care for their mouth or
- feel there are any other problems in keeping the older person's mouth and teeth clean.

But first follow the **code**:



Respect the person's privacy and dignity and make sure they are comfortable

respect



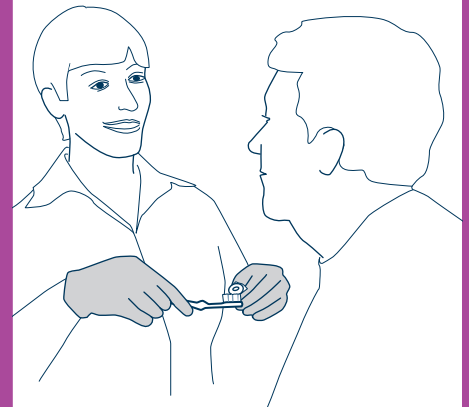
Wash your hands and wear disposable gloves

wash



Explain and **show** what you are about to do

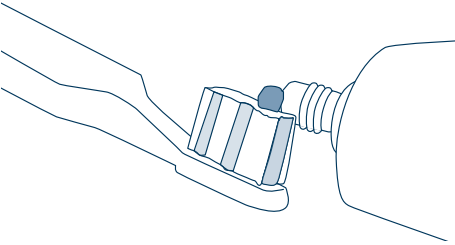
explain



Natural teeth should be cleaned at least twice a day

People with natural teeth

- 1 Use a pea-sized amount of adult fluoride toothpaste.



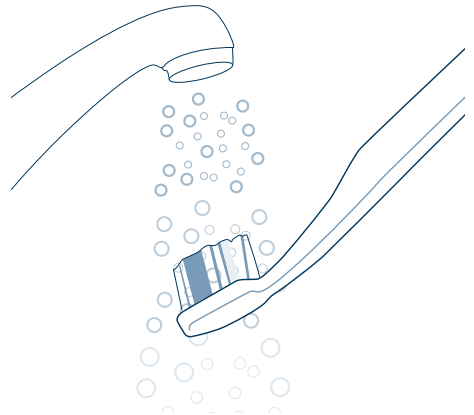
- 2 Brush teeth and gums (continue even if gums bleed slightly).



- 3 Encourage to spit but not rinse. Wipe face.



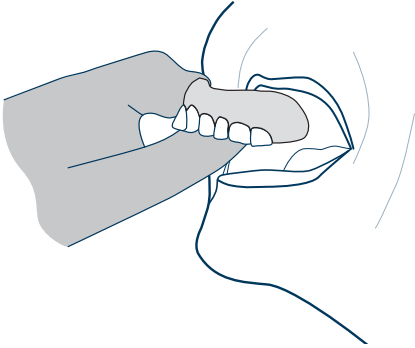
- 4 Rinse toothbrush after brushing.



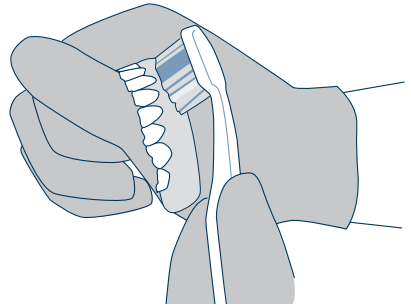
Dentures should be rinsed after every meal

People with dentures

- 1 At night, remove dentures from mouth.



- 2 Brush using a toothbrush and unperfumed soap or denture cream.



- 3 Soak the dentures in sterilising fluid for at least 20 minutes.



- 4 Then soak overnight in cold water.



Remember, the inside of the mouth still
needs to be cleaned

People with **no natural teeth**

- 1 Use a wet piece of gauze to gently clean gums and tongue.



Encourage older people to clean their own teeth.

Every time you clean a person's mouth, write it down.

If a person won't let you near their mouth, try again later – don't give up.

Look in the mouth for any problems and write them down in the care plan.