



All Wales Special Interest Group in Special Care Dentistry

# **Mouthcare For Adults with Swallowing Problems (Dysphagia)**



This booklet will support mouthcare for adults with swallowing problems



# What is Dysphagia?

Dysphagia is when food and drink or medicine do not pass easily from the mouth into the throat.

It can lead to:

- Choking
- Poor feeding
- Dehydration
- Chest infections

There are many reasons why this can happen.



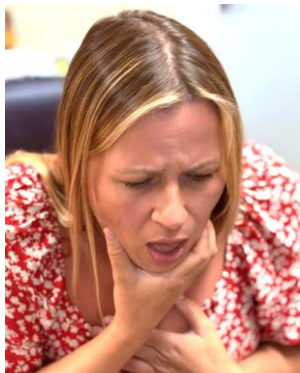
## How do we know if someone has Dysphagia?

Signs can be different from one person to another.



**Some of the signs are listed below:**

- Persistent dribbling
- Hard to swallow
- Feeling that food is stuck in throat
- Coughing
- Choking
- Vomiting/heaving while eating
- Gurgling when eating/drinking
- Frequent chest infections
- Weight loss



## Why have I been given this leaflet?

Looking after your teeth and having a healthy mouth is very important for people with dysphagia.

This includes having regular check-ups with your dentist and dental teams.

We hope this leaflet will help and give you tips.



# Mouthcare for Adults with Dysphagia

If you or someone you care for cannot brush their teeth, they may need help.

Adults with difficulty swallowing have to be careful they don't breathe in any liquid.



## Tips to help someone with Dysphagia

- Always explain to the person what you are going to do
- Keep the person as upright as possible
- If the person is lying down try to raise their head and body or turn head to one side
- Make sure there are pillows under the neck
- Keep the mouth as dry as possible using a suction toothbrush where you can
- Using clean cloth/towel/ non fraying gauze as alternative option if suction is not available

## Cleaning teeth

- Use a small **dry toothbrush**
  - Use a toothpaste that doesn't foam
  - Use a pea sized amount of toothpaste
  - You may be given a toothpaste from the dentist
  - Push toothpaste into the bristles
  - Brush teeth well
  - You may need a suction toothbrush
  - Allow breaks
- Chlorhexidine gel can be used
- People with dysphagia should **NOT** routinely use mouthwash
- Ask your dentist for any other advice



# MOUTHCARE FOR ADULTS WITH FALSE TEETH

- Remove false teeth before starting mouthcare
- Use a small toothbrush that has been slightly dampened to brush inside the mouth
- Use a denture brush to brush false teeth daily
- Do **NOT** use toothpaste
- Soak false teeth in denture cleaning solution every day following packaging instructions
- Take false teeth out at night and store in a pot of clean water



# Dental Equipment Options

## Suction Toothbrushes

Kimberly-Clark Kim Vent



Orocare Aspire Suction toothbrush



## Toothbrushes

Dr Barman's superbrush/duo-power



Collis-curve toothbrush



OraNurse oral care silicone fingertip toothbrush

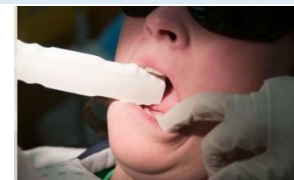


360 Toothbrush



## Mouth rests

Open wide disposable mouth rest



Dental Shield



**Please speak to your dentist for more information**