



All Wales Special Interest Group

Advice To Support Mouth Care For Adults With Swallowing Problems



**This booklet will support mouth care for adults with
swallowing problems**



What is a Swallowing Problem

A swallowing problem is when food and drink does not pass easily from the mouth into the throat.



It can lead to:

- choking
- dehydration
- poor feeding and
- chest infections

There are lots of reasons why people have this problem, such as stroke, infection or trauma

How do we know if someone has a swallow problem?

Here are some of the signs but they can be different from person to person:

- drooling,
- hard to swallow
- coughing
- choking
- gurgly voice after swallowing
- lots of chest infections
- weight loss



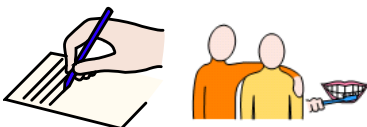
There are other problems that affect swallowing, such as:

- The tongue cannot push food down the throat
- Lips cannot close together
- Keeping food in the mouth, in the cheek or under the tongue
- Unable to feel food or drink in the mouth
- A dry mouth can make these problems worse.



Mouthcare checklist for swallowing problems

- If a person has someone who helps with their care, a mouth care checklist should be used. This helps to make sure that the best and safest mouth care is provided.



It is very important that everyone who has a swallow problem has regular checkups with their dentist.

Mouthcare

Mouthcare for people with a swallow problem

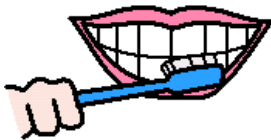


When carrying out mouthcare, think about how to make the person comfortable.

Make sure people in a seated position have good head support



If the person is lying down, try to raise or tilt their head very carefully to one side, using extra pillows.



Before tooth brushing, check and remove any food left in the mouth.



Remove any extra food / fluid with suction or use a clean towel



- Use a toothbrush to clean the mouth and teeth.



You can use an:

- electric, battery- operated, or
- suction toothbrush, if tolerated.



If a person is uncooperative with toothbrushing, a superbrush may help.



Do not use mouthwashes for people with swallowing problems

Care Plans – Adults

Adults with teeth



- Use Chlorhexidine Gluconate gel or spray around the gums, tongue and cheeks - twice a day



- Brush twice a day with a soft, small, **dry** toothbrush



- Use a toothpaste which has 1450ppm sodium fluoride and is anti-tartar



- Be careful they do not choke
- Remove any extra fluid with suction or a clean towel



- Apply lip moisturiser, when needed



Adults with no teeth



- Brush gums with a moist, small, soft toothbrush twice a day



- Suction or remove extra fluid with a dry, clean towel



- Massage Chlorhexidine Gluconate gel or spray twice daily around the teeth, gum margins, tongue, cheeks and palate



- Apply lip moisturiser, when needed

Denture Care



Cleaning dentures:

Keep dentures clean; brush twice a day.



- Soak denture in sodium hypochlorite or chlorhexidine gluconate for 3 minutes



- Brush denture with liquid soap or denture cream and a denture brush



- Rinse denture well under running water



- Leave dentures out of the mouth at night

and

- Store dry in a named denture pot



- If dentures need fixative, make sure it is brushed off every day

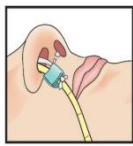
Mouth Care Plan for those with – Unsafe Swallows



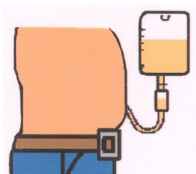
Mouthcare for people who have unsafe swallows:

People with unsafe swallows are more likely to accidentally breathe in mouth fluids, like spit (saliva).

These people may be:



- Fed by a tube through the nose (nasogastric tube)



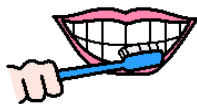
- A tube into the stomach (PEG- fed)



- In intensive care and have a tube to breath (intubated / ventilated)



Even if a person is not able to eat or drink, it is very important to brush the mouth and teeth



Keeping the mouth and teeth clean will help stop infections, especially chest infections.



If you use suction make sure the suction tip is changed every day.



Use a fluoride toothpaste that does not foam.

Some toothpastes can help stop tartar build up on teeth (list at the end of the leaflet).

Mouth Care Plan for those with – Unsafe Swallows

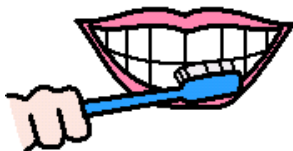


Adults with no natural teeth still need good mouthcare.

It is important to keep the mouth as clean as possible.



- Every 2 – 3 hours wet the mouth with a small, soft toothbrush using clean water/saline
- Apply water based moisturiser every 2-3 hours to the lips and inside the mouth
- This will help keep the mouth moist
- Massage Chlorhexidine Gluconate gel or spray around the gum margins, tongue, cheeks and palate



Adults with Teeth

- Every 2-3 hours, wet the mouth with a small, soft toothbrush using clean water/saline
- Apply water based moisturiser every 2-3 hours to the lips and inside the mouth to keep them moist
- Brush teeth twice a day with small, soft toothbrush
- Use a non-foaming fluoride toothpaste
- Remove any extra food / fluid with suction or use a clean
- Use Chlorhexidine Gluconate gel or spray twice daily around the teeth and mouth
- Massage gel or spray around the gum margins, tongue, cheeks and palate

Mouth Care Plan for those with – Unsafe Swallows



Adults with Dentures

- Dentures must be removed and left out of the mouth, while intubated or ventilated
- Soak in dilute sodium hypochlorite or Chlorhexidine Gluconate for 3 minutes
- Brush dentures really well, to remove bacteria or food with a denture brush
- Store dry in a named denture pot



All Adults:

- Use Chlorhexidine Gluconate gel or spray twice daily around the teeth and mouth
- Massage gel or spray around the gum margins, tongue, cheeks and palate

Tartar Control Toothpaste

Toothpastes that can be used to stop tartar (calculus) build-up:



- Aquafresh tartar-control whitening
- Sensodyne Tartar-control plus whitening
- Oral B Pro-expert Whitening/All-round protection
- Oral B Proexpert Sensitive toothpaste
- Sensodyne Total Care

Dental Equipment



Special toothbrushes:

- Kimberly-Clark Kim Vent: Ready care oral care www.vap.kchealthcare.com
- Oro-Care 2 www.intersurgical.co.uk
- Plak-Vac: USA ordering.
- Dr Barman's superbrush/duo-power www.dentocare.co.uk
- Collis-curve toothbrushes www.colliscurve.co.uk

Mouthprops:

- Dental shield www.dentocare.co.uk
- Open wide disposable mouth rest www.dentocare.co.uk

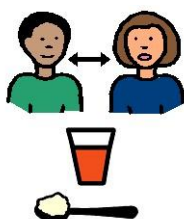
More Information

If you would like more information or help with this leaflet contact:



Community Dental Service

Or



Speak to the swallowing teams about suction equipment