



# ORAL HYGIENE CARE FOR CAREGIVERS



# Objectives

- Explore ways you can help your loved one care for themselves at home.
- Learn about different oral hygiene care techniques: brushing, flossing, etc.
- Identify resources available for caregivers needing information or assistance with hygiene care.



# WHY THE CHANGES?

Does it seem like your loved one has changed? Were they the type of person who always made sure to look their best? Have you noticed a change in their hygiene care?



Hair not as cared for as it used to be? Different make-up routine? Less of a clean shave? Different odor present? Bad breath?



These observations can be quite difficult for caregivers. *When and why did my loved one start changing?*

# WHY THE CHANGES?

Depending on your loved one's health, resources and living arrangements, many things can lead to a lack of hygiene.

## Memory loss:

Someone with memory loss may forget whether they showered or brushed their teeth. They may also forget how to perform certain tasks (laundry, ironing, etc.)



## Lack of resources:

If someone doesn't have the money or a mode of transport to afford/obtain certain supplies, it could impact the person's ability to care for themselves.



## Depression:

One of the main symptoms of depression is a lack of interest/motivation. This includes a loss of interest for activities, including taking care of themselves.

# WHY THE CHANGES?

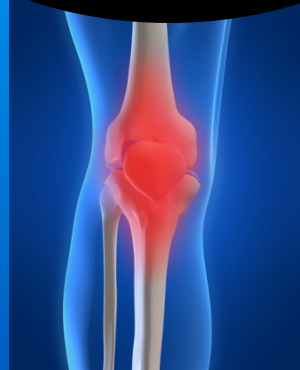
## Pain:

Someone that is feeling pain may not have the energy to care for themselves. Movements involved with self-care could be painful for the person.



## Arthritis:

Like with pain, people with arthritis can be limited in their activities because of the inflammation in their joints. This can be quite painful and movements may be limited.



## Decrease in eyesight:

People who have a hard time seeing may not realize that their clothes are stained or that they don't match.

# Why Is Personal Hygiene So Important?

Not taking care of ones personal hygiene can cause many problems for the person involved.

Maintaining good personal hygiene is one of the most basic and simple ways to **stay healthy**.



Our bodies are a perfect place for germs (bacteria) to grow. If we do not wash our clothes, bodies, mouths and hair regularly, these germs stick around and eventually cause infections and sickness.

Also, there is the **social aspect** to consider. People who lack hygiene may receive negative comments or looks from others in public. This can be quite hurtful and hard on the ego!

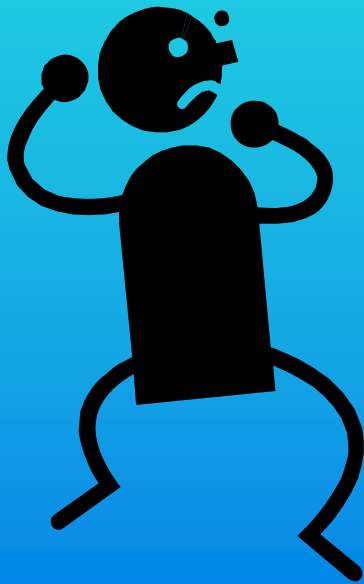


Before we get into the technical  
information...  
here is a skill testing question...

What is the  
most important, #1,  
hygiene principle ?



Anyone need a hint???



*“It only takes a minute,  
It’s quick and easy too,  
Everyone can do it!  
And it can help prevent the  
flu!”*

WHO GUESSED IT?

**HANDWASHING!**



In order to prevent the spread of germs and sickness...the **best way** you can protect yourself and your loved ones is to **wash your hands** and make sure they wash theirs!



Picture: [http://2.bp.blogspot.com/\\_-663HFTZehw/TEDTotn5Qwl/AAAAAAAAA4/QLK16YT9sTc/s1600/med22-germs.jpg](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_-663HFTZehw/TEDTotn5Qwl/AAAAAAAAA4/QLK16YT9sTc/s1600/med22-germs.jpg)

# HANDWASHING HOW TO

It may seem simple, but there are specific ways and times to wash hands to prevent the spread of germs.

## WHEN?

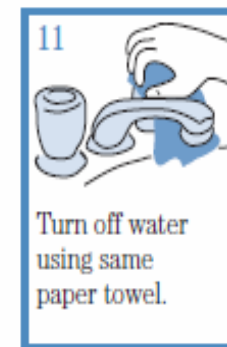
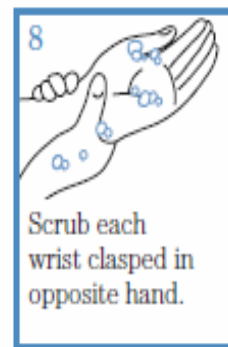
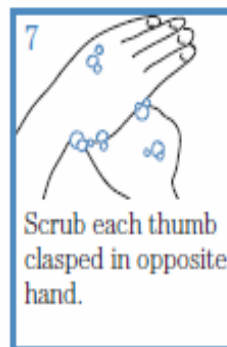
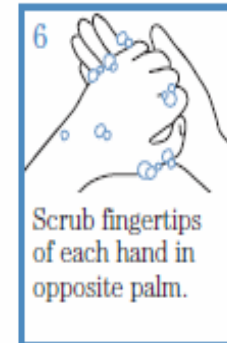
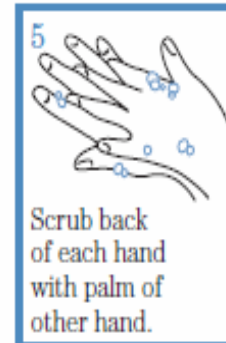
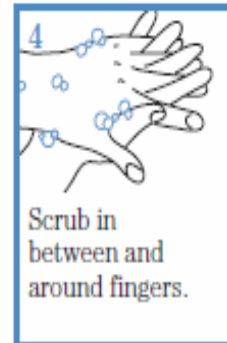
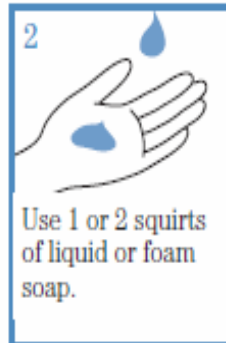
1. After using the washroom.
2. Before and after preparing food.
3. When hands are visibly (look) dirty.
4. Before and after the personal care of someone (especially someone who is ill).
5. After sneezing, coughing or blowing nose.
6. After coming into contact with a pet.



# HOW?

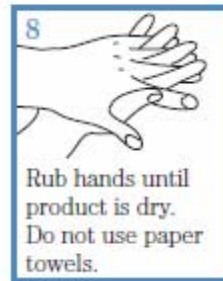
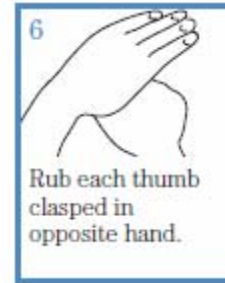
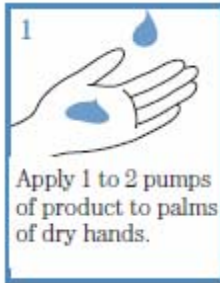
This should take at least 15 seconds..or the length of time it takes to sing *The Happy Birthday Song*.

## Handwashing with soap and water



# HOW?

## Cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub



Telehealth Ontario



- Red: Areas most frequently missed during hand washing
- Blue: Less frequently missed
- Orange: Not missed

Don't forget these hard-to-reach areas!



Now we will focus  
on oral hygiene.

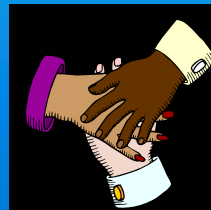


# This guide will provide information for caregivers about oral hygiene care.

Throughout the presentation, two symbols will be used



When you see this one: the information that follows is geared towards the care of **AUTONOMOUS** loved ones (people who need only a **bit of help** to do the activity).



When you see this one: the information that follows is geared towards the care of **LESS AUTONOMOUS** loved ones (people who need a **lot of help** to do the activity).

# TIPS ON HYGIENE



→ The first step in ensuring that the procedure will be successful (brushing teeth, shaving, etc.) is always REDUCING FEAR...making your loved one comfortable!

→ If your loved one seems nervous, ACT OUT the procedure so they know what is ahead. Either do it yourself (floss your own teeth) or pretend to do it (pretend to brush your teeth). This makes the activity a lot less frightening.

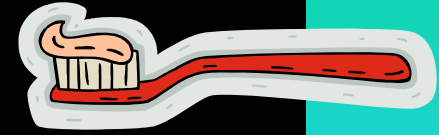
→ Always EXPLAIN what you are doing, as you are doing it. This prevents startling your loved one and cuts down on surprises.



→ Hygiene care involves a lot of contact and quite a bit of intimacy. Always try your best to keep a confidential environment. Make sure your loved one is comfortable and always respect their dignity.



# ORAL HYGIENE



**The Golden Rules: Brush, Floss & Visit your dentist!**



## Why oral hygiene is important

The mouth is a place that is naturally filled with bacteria. Not cleaning this area regularly can lead to infections, bad breath, cavities and even loss of teeth...not to mention...everyone loves a nice smile!



# ORAL HYGIENE



1. Make oral hygiene a **routine**. This makes it easier for you loved one to understand.

2. Make sure your loved one is **relaxed**. Do not make mouth care stressful. Find a comfortable place for your loved one to do this. Play music if that helps.



3. Make sure you and your loved one can **see**! It is hard to tell what is clean when it is too dark to see what you are working with.

4. Make sure you have all the **supplies** you need close by. This will save time and help you and your loved one get everything done at once.



# ORAL HYGIENE: BRUSHING



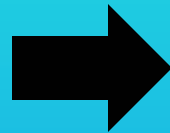
1. Your loved one should be brushing their teeth at least **2 times per day**.
2. Place all **supplies** in front of your loved one. This includes the toothbrush, toothpaste and glass of water .
3. Your loved one should be brushing in a **top to bottom motion**...not from side to side. Side to side movements can damage the gums.
4. Make sure they brush their **tongue!** This helps control bad breath and gets rid of bacteria in the mouth.
5. Brush for at least **120 seconds** (2 full minutes!).
6. Don't forget to **rinse** mouth when finished.
7. The toothbrush should be **changed every 3 months**, or whenever the bristles seem to be worn out.



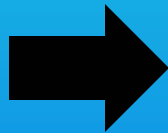
# ORAL HYGIENE: BRUSHING



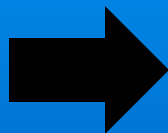
Here are some tips to make teeth brushing easier.



A Velcro handle used to hold utensils can help your loved one get a better grip on the brush.



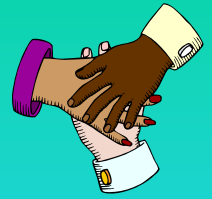
A simple elastic band can help do the trick too.



Cutting a slit in a tennis ball and putting it onto the end of the brush can make it easier to hold.



# ORAL HYGIENE: BRUSHING



1. First, wash your hands and put on disposable rubber gloves.
2. Make sure you are standing or sitting comfortably and that you can see. Positioning yourself behind the person can help.



3. Brush your loved ones teeth like you would your own. Do not forget the tongue!



4. Give your loved one some water to rinse their mouth.

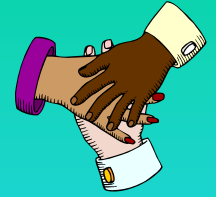


5. If your loved one is not able to rinse their mouth, take a gauze and wrap it around your finger. Run the gauze along the teeth and inside of your loved ones mouth to get rid of the extra toothpaste.

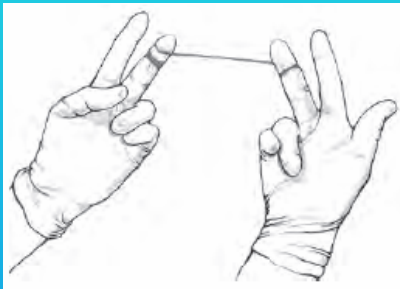




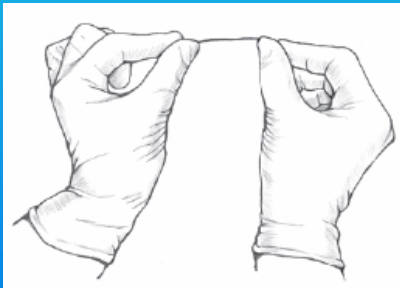
# ORAL HYGIENE: FLOSSING



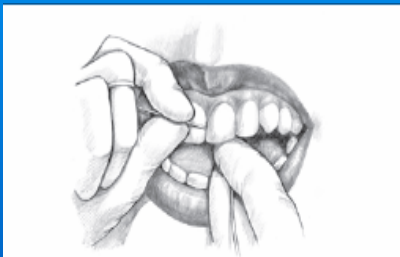
Steps for flossing are the same for both the autonomous and less autonomous. The main difference is that the autonomous person will be able to do it themselves. The less autonomous person will have it done by the caregiver. Your loved one should floss every day.



- 1. If you are the caregiver, wear gloves. Wrap the floss around your middle fingers**



- 2. Grab the floss between your thumb and index finger of each hand.**



- 3. Insert floss between the teeth and move it up and down. Make sure to reach the gum line! Each time you move onto a new tooth, use a clean section of the floss.**



# ORAL HYGIENE: DENTURES

1. Dentures are **fragile!** Never handle them over a hard surface because dropping them may cause them to break. Always place a towel over the hard surface, or fill the sink with water while cleaning them.
2. **Clean them each day!** They need to be cared for just like natural teeth.
3. **Take them out every night.** Don't forget to gently brush the gums. If your loved one's gums are not healthy, their dentures will become painful to wear.
4. **Soak them overnight** either in warm (NOT HOT) water, denture cleanser OR a mix of warm water and vinegar (half and half).



# ORAL HYGIENE: DENTURES

Ask your loved one to remove their dentures for you. If they are unable to, put on rubber gloves and assist them.



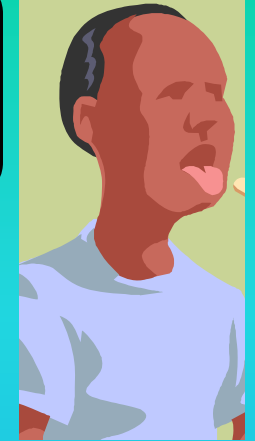
To put dentures back into the mouth, put the **top ones in first**, and then the bottom ones. Press into place. Ask your loved one to bite down.

Pull and move them side to side gently until they are loose and then pull them out.

# ORAL HYGIENE: DENTURES



## What To Look For



- Look inside the mouth regularly. Look for **changes** like redness, swelling, red or white patches, cuts, or sores.
- Ask your loved one if they are in **pain**. Look for non-verbal signs of pain (wrinkled forehead, not wanting to wear dentures, crying, etc.)
- Look at the gums!!! This is very important for 2 major reasons: gum disease and the health of remaining teeth.

# ORAL HYGIENE: GUM DISEASE

Bacteria in the mouth can cause swelling of the gums.

This is called GINGIVITIS.

Gingivitis is a mild type of gum disease.

It can cause swollen, painful, dark red gums that bleed easily.



If not cared for...gingivitis can lead to a more serious disease...

Picture: [www.healthysmiles.org.nz](http://www.healthysmiles.org.nz)

## PERIODONTITIS

This is a more serious type of gum disease.

It causes swelling all around the tooth.

The gums pull away from the teeth. The gaps can become infected.

If the infection is not treated, the bones and tissues that hold the teeth in place can be destroyed too.



Teeth can fall out.

Picture: [www.australianprescriber.com](http://www.australianprescriber.com)

# ORAL HYGIENE: DENTURES

## RED FLAGS



**Contact your loved one's dentist if any of the following occur:**

- Dentures become too loose or too tight, break, or crack.
- A tooth (natural or false) chips or becomes loose. This can be very dangerous because it can cause choking.
- Signs of infection: redness, swelling of the gums, cut or sore that won't heal, pus, bad breath, bleeding, pain, fever.



# VISITING THE DENTIST

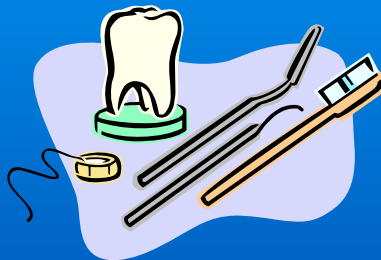
The dentist's office can seem like a scary place for many people.

Prepare your loved one ahead of time by letting him/her know the purpose of your visit.

Write down the things you want to tell or ask the dentist. Bring this list with you.

Bring all necessary paperwork with you. It is a good idea to know your loved one's medical history, the dentist might ask questions about this.

Keep track of what happens at each dental appointment. This will help you follow through and get your loved one the best care possible.



*You're never fully dressed  
without a smile.*



*~ Martin Charmin*

# GREAT SITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. Dental Care Every Day: A Caregiver's Guide.**

<http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/OralHealth/Topics/DevelopmentalDisabilities/DentalCareEveryDay.htm>

- **Seniors' Info. A Collaborative Online Resource.**

<http://www.seniorsinfo.ca/en/categories/659>

- **The Canadian Dental Association: Your Oral Health.**

[http://www.cda-adc.ca/en/oral\\_health/index.asp](http://www.cda-adc.ca/en/oral_health/index.asp)

