

CAREGIVING AND ORAL CARE

Whether you are caring for an aging parent or disabled child or adult, you want to provide the best possible care. Each day requires managing multiple medications, meals, bodily hygiene, and exercise. Your role in providing daily oral care is also important and can help improve your loved one's overall health and quality of life.

DID YOU KNOW?

CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS, AND ADULTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ARE ALMOST TWICE AS LIKELY TO HAVE ORAL HEALTH ISSUES.



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE ALSO LESS LIKELY TO HAVE ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL DENTAL SERVICES THAN PEOPLE WITHOUT DISABILITIES²

IN 2016, **47%** OF ADULT PATIENTS WITH DISABILITIES DIDN'T VISIT A DENTIST³

DISABLED CHILDREN ARE **2x MORE LIKELY** TO HAVE UNMET ORAL HEALTHCARE² NEEDS THAN THEIR PEERS

As a caregiver, it is important for you to know that mouth health affects overall oral health and quality of life.⁴ To help ensure the best outcome:



Provide oral hygiene every day. When the mouth and teeth are clean, there is less chance for bacteria to grow, reducing the risks for a variety of mouth disorders and infections. This is especially important for people with weakened immune systems.⁵



Have a clean routine. Since there are bacteria in the mouth, it is always a good idea to wear gloves when you're caring for someone's mouth or handling dentures to reduce the spread of infection.⁵



Ask your dental professional. If you are having difficulty cleaning someone's mouth and teeth, let his or her dentist know—he or she can also provide helpful tips or a different approach.⁶

For more resources that can help you provide superior care to people with disabilities, visit nidcr.nih.gov/oralhealth/Topics/DevelopmentalDisabilities

For those who have trouble brushing and flossing, rinsing twice a day with ADA-accepted LISTERINE[®] mouthwash can provide 24-hour protection against plaque and gingivitis.⁷

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References: 1. 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>. Accessed May 2, 2017. 2. Special Care. An oral health professional's guide to serving young children with special health care needs. https://www.mchoralhealth.org/SpecialCare/mod1_keypoints.htm. Accessed May 2, 2017. 3. Tilly J. Oral health's relationship to disease and options for expanding services for older adults and adults who have disabilities. *Center for Policy and Evaluation. Administration for Community Living*. 2016:1-16. 4. Tooth Wisdom. Health Resources for Older Adults. Caring for a senior's smile. <http://www.toothwisdom.org/resources/entry/caring-for-a-seniors-smile>. Accessed May 2, 2017. 5. Barrett S. Personal care tasks. The journey through caregiving. *North Dakota Family Caregiver Project*. North Dakota State University. 2003:1-106. 6. Mouth Healthy. Aging and dental health. <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/a/aging-and-dental-health>. Accessed May 2, 2017. 7. Learn more about mouthrinses. ADA.org Web site. <http://www.ada.org/en/science-research/ada-seal-of-acceptance/product-category-information/mouthrinses>. Accessed May 2, 2017.