

ORAL HYGIENE TIPS

- Patients should have their teeth brushed after every meal, therefore 2-3 times a day. If not possible, then a rinse with water will do after each meal. If patients are difficult to brush, some hospitals supply lollipop sponges, they are good to help wipe the teeth as much as possible. They can be dipped in mouthwash or even warm salt water, if the gums look sore.
- Patients should always use a soft-bristled toothbrush, small or medium sized, with a pea-size of toothpaste. Electric toothbrushes, such as Oral B Braun, are recommended especially if dexterity is a problem.
- The correct brushing technique used is called the Bass Technique. It involves a 45degree angle brushing in a soft circular movement. You brush from upper right side to the upper left side front, drop down and work your way on the front still from left to right. Continue on the top backside (palate side) and move right to left and then drop down backside (tongue side) and move left to right. Make sure to get the gingival margin. The area that most collects is behind the bottom front teeth, so use a sweeping out motion in this area.
- If flossing can be done, it should be done after every meal to prevent cavities from forming in between teeth.
- Remind the patients to always brush their tongue and hard palate. Bacterium lives on smooth surfaces also. The tongue has tiny hairs and fissures that also like to inhabit bacteria. This will also lead to halitosis (bad breath).
- Some patients are prescribed a home Fluoride for daily use. This helps with sensitivity and prevention of root caries. Within the geriatric population, this condition is rampant due to medical histories, medications and allergies.

- Mouthwashes are okay as long as the patient does not have open sores or tender gums because it will sting due to the minimal alcohol content in the wash. If ulcers are present, then the best thing to use is warm salt-water rinses.
- If a patient wears dentures (partial or complete), they need to be removed at night and soaked in a denture cup filled with water only. Tablets can be used for cleansing of dentures at night. The mouth needs to be rinsed after removing the dentures, so mouth is free of food before going to bed. In the morning, dentures are inserted into the mouth and rinsed after every meal during the day. If adhesive is used, then make sure all the glue is removed when removing dentures at night. To place new adhesive, place five spots for the upper and four spots for the lower (GIVE DEMO).
- If patient complains of soreness in the mouth, they may have an ulcer being caused by their denture. You can use warm salt water to heal it in the meantime and call a dentist to come evaluate and adjust the denture.
- If anything in the mouth looks abnormal, then call a dentist immediately for a consultation. However, make sure you get an approval by the family first. Also have the Medical History, Medications and Allergies available to give to the Dentist.