



Swallow
Aware

How to Help People With Swallowing Difficulties Keep Their Mouths Clean

Information For Carers and Staff



Why is oral hygiene important?

Daily oral care is important for every person regardless of medical condition, presence or absence of teeth and even when Nil by Mouth.

→ For people with swallowing difficulties inadequate mouth care can increase the risk of chest infections and aspiration pneumonia

How to help with oral hygiene:

- Encourage the person to brush their own teeth twice daily for two minutes.
- Use a smear of low foaming toothpaste e.g. Pronamel / Oranurse on a dry toothbrush.
- Clean the whole mouth (tongue / teeth / gums).
- If you are assisting, stand behind the person tilting their head slightly forward to reduce their risk of swallowing residue or toothpaste.
- Spit out toothpaste, do not rinse.
- For those at increased risk of choking please seek further advice from a dentist.

Dentures should be:

- Removed at night
- Cleaned twice daily
- Labelled with persons name
- Stored in a named denture box

**NIL BY MOUTH
DOES **NOT** MEAN NO
NEED FOR MOUTH CARE**

