

Did you know?

We need to assist people who have Alzheimer's disease or Dementia with their oral health.

Seniors' Health and Continuing Care

People with Alzheimer Disease or Dementia require some assistance with daily oral care in the early and mid-stages of the disease. They require total care in the advanced stages.

How can I assist an individual with their oral health when they have Alzheimer's or dementia?

- Brush teeth twice a day.
- Floss teeth once a day. If flossing becomes too difficult, a small tufted end toothbrush may replace flossing.
- Clean cheeks, tongue and roof of the mouth with a soft toothbrush at least once a day.
- Assistance to guide the brush to areas of the mouth may be required, such as the caregiver placing their hand on top of the individual's hand or having the individual's hand over your hand (hand over hand technique).
- In later stages, the caregiver may need to provide all of the daily oral hygiene.

What else should I know about oral care?

- Strong tasting toothpaste may irritate gums, so mild antibacterial gel products (like Perivex) are recommended. Ask an oral health professional or pharmacist about these products.
- In the late stages of the disease, an individual may be frightened by the sound of an electric toothbrush.

What should I know about denture care?

- In the early and middle stages of the disease, reminders and coaching to remove and clean dentures may be required.
- In the later stages of the disease, the caregiver will need to provide all of the care including removing the dentures at night.
- Dentures should be labeled with owner's name in case the individual misplaces them. A dentist or denturist can provide this service.
- Full or partial dentures that are loose can prevent proper chewing and speaking.
- Oral Tissues need to be gently brushed with a regular toothbrush after dentures are removed from the mouth.

What should I know about visits to the Oral Health Professionals?

- Inform the oral health professional early of the disease diagnosis, to allow for any changes that may be needed in treatment planning.
- Shorter and more frequent dental appointments may be needed.
- Sedation may be required for some treatment.

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