



A fact sheet for providers



Supporting daily oral health care in residential aged care



Daily management of a resident's oral health is part of meeting Aged Care Quality Standard 3 – Personal and Clinical Care including:

3(2) The organisation delivers safe and effective personal care, clinical care, or both personal care and clinical care, in accordance with the consumer's needs, goals and preferences to optimise health and wellbeing; and

3(3)(f) Timely and appropriate referrals to individuals, other organisations and providers of other care and services including dental practitioners.

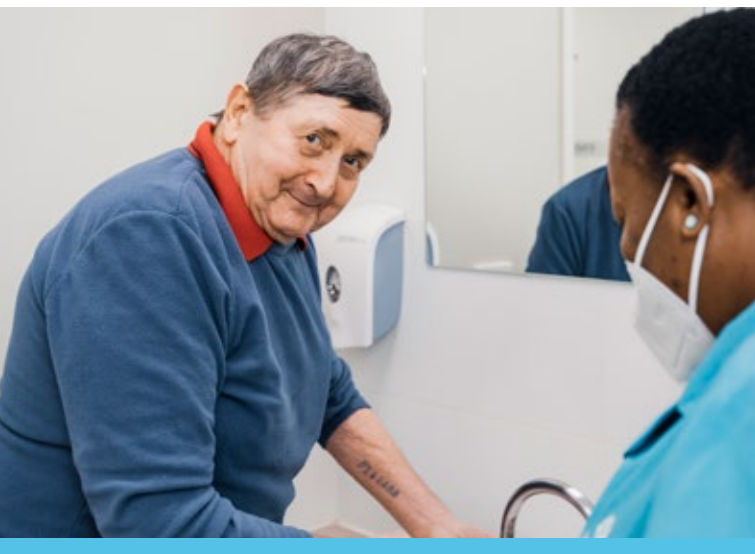
Why oral health matters

This fact sheet outlines your role as a provider in ensuring your staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to support residents' daily oral health care.

Encouraging your staff to focus on residents' oral health every day is an important way to prevent oral health issues and ensure residents can enjoy a high quality of life.

Good oral health means that residents can eat, drink and enjoy their meals. Poor oral health can affect many parts of a resident's life including their ability to eat, drink, communicate and sleep. It can also impact their confidence, dignity and mental wellbeing.

When poor oral health impacts a resident's ability to eat and drink, it can cause dehydration, malnutrition and weight loss.



How it's done

✓ **Ensure your staff have the skills to support residents to manage their oral health care**

Support your staff to develop the knowledge and skills to support residents in their daily oral health care and to recognise and respond to signs of poor oral health.

✓ **Make oral health care part of your staff daily care activities**

Making oral health part of daily care activities is key to preventing oral health decline and effectively managing oral health.

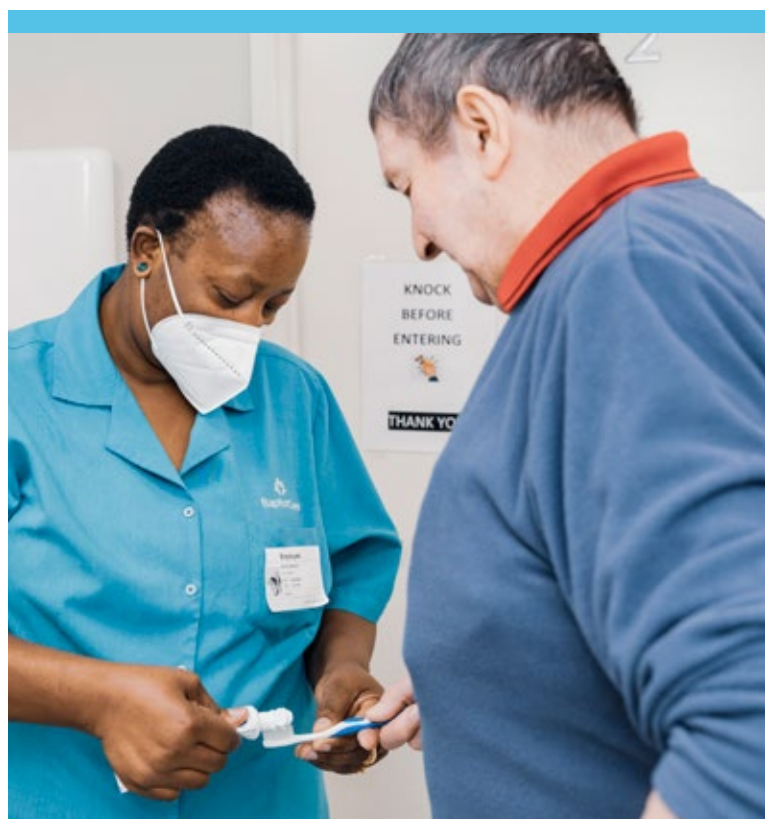
- have clear expectations and processes in place to ensure that oral health care is prioritised
- have processes to check and audit this aspect of care
- have clear processes for identification and escalation of mouth, dental and denture issues
- ensure toothbrushes are in good condition and regularly replaced and toothpaste is always accessible
- ensure processes to care for and reinsert dentures are followed.

✓ **Encourage your staff to support residents in their daily oral health care**

Your staff should have the capability and capacity to support residents with their oral hygiene.

Ensure your staff have the skills to assist residents with:

- encouraging residents to brush their own teeth or dentures if they can
- prompting and setting up toothbrushes for residents who require it
- gently brushing their teeth with a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste
- helping to remove their dentures so cleaning can be done
- helping to clean or cleaning their dentures
- helping place their dentures back in their mouth
- rinsing out their mouth after eating or between meals.





Residents with cognitive impairment can often still brush their own teeth as it is a long-familiar activity that can be retained.

Residents with cognitive impairment who resist oral hygiene care will sometimes accept care from trusted staff members or family with a calm approach and clear, simple explanation.

Those who regularly resist care should be seen by a dental practitioner for an assessment. The dental practitioner can demonstrate oral hygiene care to staff who can then support residents with these issues.

✓ Act on issues straight away

If your staff notice any issues with a resident's mouth, teeth or dentures it is important that they act on it straight away by contacting a dental practitioner, with the resident's permission.

Refer to the [Know, Look, Act fact sheet](#) for the signs of poor oral health and what to do about it.

Familiarise your staff with an assessment tool such as the [Oral Health Assessment](#) from SA Dental.

✓ Develop oral health knowledge and skills

If you or your staff need to develop skills or knowledge in preventing issues with and/or managing oral health, you can:

- read about what to look for and what to do in the [Know, Look, Act fact sheet](#)
- access the [Better Oral Health in Residential Care](#) staff training manual
- access the [Mouth Care Matters](#) website for staff oral health resources
- undertake the [Senior Smiles Program](#) which provides education for residential aged care staff on oral health care
- visit the Australian Dental Association's website [teeth.org.au](#) which provides advice on oral health and information on accessing dental care.

Phone the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's Food, Nutrition and Dining Hotline on **1800 844 044** (free call), 9am – 5pm AEDT, Monday to Friday if you wish to speak with professionals about issues, ideas or concerns in relation to an enjoyable food, nutrition and dining experience in an aged care service. Alternatively, you can contact the Commission's general enquiries line on **1800 951 822** (free call).

 **1800 844 044**
Food, Nutrition and Dining Hotline
Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm AEDT



Phone

1800 951 822



Web

agedcarequality.gov.au



Write

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
GPO Box 9819, in your capital city