



A fact sheet for aged care staff



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 steps you can take to support residents to manage their oral health.

Good oral health helps residents to eat, drink and enjoy their meals. Poor oral health can affect many parts of a resident's life including:

- their ability to eat and drink
- their ability to speak and communicate
- interrupting sleep
- causing mouth and teeth pain

- reduced confidence in their appearance.

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

Focusing on oral health every day is an important way to prevent oral health issues and ensure residents enjoy a high quality of life.



How it's done

✓ Make oral health care part of daily care activities

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

✓ Support residents in their daily oral health care

You can support residents to:

- brush their teeth twice a day with a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste
- remove dentures for cleaning and help to put them back in their mouth
- clean their dentures with soft soap and a soft denture brush
- remove dentures at night and store them in a dry container (no water) with a lid
- rinse their mouths with water after eating.

Residents with cognitive impairment who resist oral hygiene care should be seen by a dental practitioner for an assessment. The dental practitioner can demonstrate oral hygiene care to you so you can help residents with these issues.

✓ Act on any issues straight away

If you notice any issues with a resident's mouth, teeth or dentures it is important that you 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.

✓ Develop oral health knowledge and skills

If you need to develop skills or knowledge in preventing and/or managing oral health issues, 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