Providing Dental Care for Geriatric Patients in Long Term Care
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*Direct Care Staff will be able to:*

1. Discuss why good dental health promotes overall health and quality of life.
2. Describe the potential benefits to nursing care delivery when daily dental care is maintained.
3. Discuss plaque bacteria and how prevention can protect the mouth from damage caused by plaque.
4. Identify ways to control plaque in older persons that are functionally dependent and cognitively impaired

5. Identify visible dental problems that should be reported to the nurse or other healthcare provider who might refer to the dentist
Why is Oral Health Important?

Dental disease is common in the nursing home and homebound population
The Mouth is a Mirror of Health and Disease

*Signs can be seen in the mouth*

- Systemic Disease
- Bacterial and Fungal Infections
- Nutritional Deficiencies
Importance of Dental Health to Overall Health and Well-Being

Poor dental health can make other problems worse!

• Cardiovascular Disease
• Diabetes
• Malnutrition
• Stroke
• Pneumonia

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Importance of Dental Health to Overall Health and Well-Being

Dental Infections

↓↑

Body Infections

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Importance of Dental Health to Well-being and Quality of Life

Consequences of Poor Oral Health

• Poor self-esteem
• Decreased social interaction
• Problems with eating
• Problems with sleeping
• Problems with speech
• Mouth pain
Common Dental Problems Seen in Long Term Care

• Gum Disease
• Dental Cavities
• Sores in the Mouth
• Ill-fitting Dentures
• Little Saliva
Special Problems of Dry Mouth

*Increase risk of dental cavities, gum disease and infection*

- Difficulty eating
- Difficulty swallowing
- Difficulty speaking
- Altered taste
- Ill-fitting dentures
What is PLAQUE?

*Bacteria from food and sweets not completely removed from teeth and dentures on a daily basis causes plaque*

- Bacterial Plaque starts as a soft white sticky film commonly found at the gumline and interproximally
- Bacterial Plaque becomes rock hard (calculus or aka tartar) over time

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Consequences of Plaque Bacteria

- Gum Disease (Periodontal Disease leading to tooth loss)
- Dental Cavities
- Respiratory Disease

*It is bacterial plaque, not aging, that causes tooth loss*
Direct Care Staff are IMPORTANT

You can prevent the older person’s decline in health with daily dental hygiene care

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Daily Mouth Care

BENEFITS
to Older Adults
and Direct Care Staff

• Minimize medical problems
• Enhance quality of life
• Enhance cooperation
• Enhance nursing care delivery

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Importance of Dental Health to Overall Health and Well-being

Plaque Bacteria
↓
Dental Infections
↓↑
Body Infections
↓
Poor Quality of Life

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Oral Health Care Delivery

• How can I better provide dental care?

• Are there special products that will help me to do a better job with daily mouth care?

• Are there any tips that will help me to provide mouth care for an older person that is uncooperative?
WE CAN CONTROL DENTAL DISEASES

• Daily Plaque Removal

• Functional, Physical, and Cognitive Impaired Older Adults
SUGGESTED PLAQUE CONTROL

*Older Adults with Natural Teeth*

**Tooth brushing**

Removes plaque on the surface of teeth

- Soft toothbrush
- Circular motion
- Brush for 2 minutes
- Massage gums

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
SUGGESTED PLAQUE CONTROL
Older Adults with Natural Teeth

Flossing

Removes plaque between teeth and under the gums

- See-Saw motion to insert floss between teeth
- Up and down motion
- Careful not to cut into gums

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
SUGGESTED PLAQUE CONTROL

Brushing and flossing together thoroughly clean teeth and help prevent dental cavities, gum disease and tooth loss.
User Friendly Dental Hygiene Aids
Removing Plaque on Tooth Surfaces
User Friendly Dental Hygiene Aids
Removing Plaque Between Teeth

- Floss Holders and Disposable Floss
- Proxa-brush
- Stimudents
User Friendly Dental Hygiene Aids

*Helps to Keep Mouth Open*

- Safety
- Control
- Comfort
Older Adults Able to Do Self-Care

**Dental Health Care Aids**
- Electric Toothbrush
- Regular Toothbrush
- Floss Holding Devices

**How Direct Care Staff Can Assist**
- Make sure dental health care aids are readily available for use

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Older Adults Able to Do Self-Care

*Mild to Moderate Physical Impairment or Mild Cognitive Impairment*

**Dental Health Care Aids**
- Electric toothbrush
- Adapted toothbrush
- Collis curve toothbrush
- Floss Holding Devices

**How Direct Care Staff Can Assist**
- Encourage as much self care as possible
- Remind often for those with cognitive impairment
- Check to ensure thorough cleaning

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Older Adults Able to Do Self-Care

Moderate Cognitive Impairment

Dental Health Care Aids

• Electric Toothbrush
• Adapted Toothbrush
• Collis Curve Toothbrush
• Floss Holding Devices

How Direct Care Staff Can Assist

Can Follow Directions

• Constant reminding
• Break up the steps for cleaning into simple steps
• Post step-by-step instructions on mirror and label mouth supplies

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Older Adults Unable to Do Self-Care

Severe Physical and/or Cognitive Impairment

Dental Health Care Aids

- Foam Mouth Prop
- Electric Toothbrush
- Collis Curve Toothbrush
- Floss Holding Devices

Not Resistant to Care

How Direct Care Staff Can Assist

- Regular time for dental care each day for cognitive impaired
- Prior to care, explain cleaning process in a gentle and calm manner for cognitive impaired

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Older Adults Unable to Do Self-Care

Severe Cognitive Impairment

Dental Health Care Aids

• Foam Mouth Props
• Gauze wrapped tongue depressor
• Toothette/Wipette
• Floss Holding Devices
• Electric Toothbrush
• Collis Curve toothbrush

Resistant to Care

How Direct Care Staff Can Assist

May require two caregivers:

• One to distract the person and the other to provide care
• DO NOT force care

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
DENTURE CARE

Plaque will also form on dentures and partial dentures.
DENTURE SAFETY

• Dentures should be labeled with the name or initials of the person.

• Dentures are easy to misplace.
Denture Hygiene Care

- Dishwashing Detergent
- Denture brush or hard nailbrush
- Running water / washcloth in sink
- Denture cleaner tablets
- Denture paste
Denture Storage Container Care

- Cleaned weekly
- Diluted bleach
- Soak 1 hour
- Rinse thoroughly
DENTURE CARE

• Dentures should **NOT** be worn 24 hours a day

• Leave out at least 6 hours per day
Older Adults Able to Do Self-Care of Dentures

Dental Health Care Aids

• Denture Brush

• Cleaning Tablets

How Direct Care Staff Can Assist

• Make sure denture supplies are readily available

• Check weekly sanitation of denture storage container
Older Adults Unable to Do Self-Care for Dentures Physical or Cognitive Impairment

Dental Health Care Aids

• Denture Brush
• Cleaning Tablets

How Direct Care Staff Can Assist

• Physically clean dentures daily
• Remove dentures at night and store in container with water
• Weekly cleaning of denture container

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Signs of Dental Problems to Report

• Broken teeth
• Loose teeth
• Brown areas and dark staining
• Red, swollen or bleeding gums
• Ill-fitting dentures or partials
Early Signs of Oral Cancer to Report

- Swellings
- Red or White Patches
- Sores
- Numbness
- Lumps

Early oral cancer may be present even without pain

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
IMPORTANCE of Oral Health Care

Plaque Bacteria

Regular Daily Dental Hygiene Care

Identify Visible Dental Problems

Quality of Life

Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
Summary of Objectives

You will now be able to:

• Discuss why good dental health promotes overall health and quality of life
• Describe the potential benefits to nursing care delivery when daily dental care is maintained
• Discuss plaque bacteria and how prevention can protect the mouth from damage caused by plaque
• Identify ways to control plaque in older persons that are functionally dependent and cognitively impaired
• Identify visible dental problems that should be reported to the nurse or other healthcare provider who might refer to the dentist.
Thank you!