

Caring for your smile



Why mouth care matters

Having good teeth, a healthy smile and being pain free is something that really matters to everyone. Poor oral health can affect general health, with links to diabetes, strokes, heart disease, obesity, dementia and malnutrition. We know that a problem or pain in your mouth could stop you eating and affect your overall health. We also know that, it can be a struggle for some older people to keep their teeth and dentures clean and in good condition. Therefore, a member of our team will work with you to care for your mouth. The following information gives details of what you can expect.



Talking to you about your mouth care plan

When you first join our home, we will have a chat with you /or your family and friends, about your mouth care needs and discuss if you are having any problems. With your consent, a trained member of our team will also look in your mouth to check for any problem areas that you may or may not be aware of.

Together we will agree the following in your mouth care plan:

- what we can do if you are having problems or pain
- what help is needed to clean teeth and dentures
- the best times for mouth care
- what products you prefer to use and how these are provided
- recording the care provided and what happens if we are not able to clean your teeth and/or dentures e.g. we can try again at another time
- contact details of your named dentist/dental practice or if you need to find a new dentist, we will help you to do this

- when your next dental check-up is due and how this will be arranged
- how we will work with your dentist to provide preventive care you need (as discussed with your dentist)
- if you pay for dental treatment, how costs will be met
- how costs related to transport arrangements will be met if friends or family are unable to take you.

How will daily mouth care be provided?

Care of natural teeth

If you are able to clean your own teeth and dentures we would encourage you to do so, however, if you have asked for help in your mouth care plan, assistance will be provided by care staff. Staff will support teeth cleaning with a product of your choice or higher strength toothpaste (2,800/5,000ppm fluoride toothpaste if prescribed by a dentist), once before bed, and once at another agreed time.

Care of dentures

We would recommend that dentures are:

- rinsed after meals
- cleaned thoroughly at night
- soaked in water overnight in a labelled pot to give your mouth a chance to recover.

If you need assistance with any of the above our staff are happy to help and this will be identified in your mouth care plan.

Naming dentures

Lost dentures can cause major upset therefore, staff will offer to put your name on your existing dentures and work with your dentist to ensure new dentures are permanently marked during their manufacture.



What happens if mouth care is refused?

It is very important to establish a daily mouth care routine to keep your mouth healthy. However, there may be occasions when you do not want your mouth cleaned or when a medical condition stops you understanding that your teeth and/or dentures need to be kept clean (later stages of dementia). Finding a strategy that works might take time and patience and our staff may need to work closely with your family to find the best solution. If care has not been provided this will be recorded on the daily mouth care chart and if this continues to be a problem, advice will be sought from a dental professional.



How will dental appointments be organised?

Our staff will support you to continue to see your own dentist where possible.

If required, our care home staff will help you and/or your family to find a new dentist. We would recommend that you see a dentist regularly for check-ups and preventive care. The dentist will be able to advise how frequently check-up appointments are required, even if you have no teeth.

How will travel arrangements to the dentist be made?

This will be discussed at the time we agree a mouth care plan with you and/or your family. In the first instance we would encourage family and friends to support with making travel arrangements to dental appointments. However, where this is not possible, suitable arrangements will be made by our staff on your behalf, this often involves taxis. Payment for transport arrangements will remain your responsibility and be clearly identified in our cost charging policy.

How will consent for dental treatment be obtained?

It is important that you make or take part in decisions about your dental treatment if you are able to do so. Our staff will work with your dental team to inform you about your options of what needs to be done and why. Capacity to consent will be assessed and discussed with you and/or your family as part of your mouth care plan. If you cannot give informed consent, your family, professionals and/or staff will be involved in the decision-making process.

What does dental care cost?

NHS dental care is not automatically free for all older people. The guidelines for NHS dental charges are quite complex and subject to change. Currently, people receiving certain means tested benefits such as Pension Credit Guaranteed Credit, don't have to pay, but need to provide evidence that they are receiving it. If you need to apply for exemption or reduction of charges, our Care Home Manager can help by completing a shorter HC1(SC) form on your behalf. Alternatively, you or your family will need to complete the HC1 form. A certificate will then be issued stating the exemption (HC2 certificate) or reduction of charges (HC3 certificate). Please note these NHS rules and regulations may be subject to change. If you pay for your treatment, arrangements will be agreed as part of your mouth care plan. Please remember that travel arrangements may result in additional costs i.e. taxis fares.



How can family or friends get involved and share concerns with staff?

Your family or friends are an important part of your life and may want to help with your mouth care, if so, they should speak to a member of our care team. Even if your family chose to help, we will still have the responsibility to maintain daily mouth care for you should you need it. Finally, if you or your family/friends notice any changes in your mouth that cause concern, please talk to us. We value your help and involvement.

Where to go for further information and advice

The dental practice providing care for your family member or

www.nhs.uk type 'dental' in the search bar; will provide frequently asked questions and information on: finding a dentist in your area; cost for NHS dental treatment; or call 111 for NHS non-emergency dental care.

www.dentalhealth.org type 'caring for the elderly' in the search bar or call the Dental Helpline 01788 539780 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

www.ageuk.org type 'mouth care' in the search bar or call the Age UK Advice Line on 0800 678 1602, open 8am to 7pm, every day of the year.

www.relres.org/about-us/contact-us/ The Relatives & Residents Association support and inform residents, families and friends with what they need to know about residential care, and what to do if things go wrong. Tel: 020 7359 8148. Fax: 020 7226 6603.

With kind thanks to our partners who have contributed to the development of this leaflet:

- Public Health England
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- Relatives and Residents Association