

Introduction to the Care Home Oral Care Toolkit

This toolkit aims to support staff to provide good oral care in alignment with the 2018 NICE guidelines for oral care in care homes. It has been developed with health care assistants and nurses who understand the complex nature of providing good oral care. They told us that they wanted to provide good oral care for residents and knew it was important for both health and wellbeing but highlighted the challenges they often faced.

We hope this toolkit will help care home staff to find ways to overcome these challenges and enable them to provide the best care possible. We also understand it will need to be adjusted as we get feedback from the people who use it. We would love to hear your thoughts about the tool - what works, what doesn't work and any ideas for future improvements. Just send an email to topic.oralhealth@gmail.com with your thoughts or suggestions.

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Acknowledgements

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Sheffield Hallam University | Art and Design Research Centre

With co-design care home partners: Norbury Court, Scarsdale Grange, Rosebank Care Home and Broomgrove Nursing Home.

In collaboration with University College London, Queens University Belfast, Newcastle University and Bangor University.



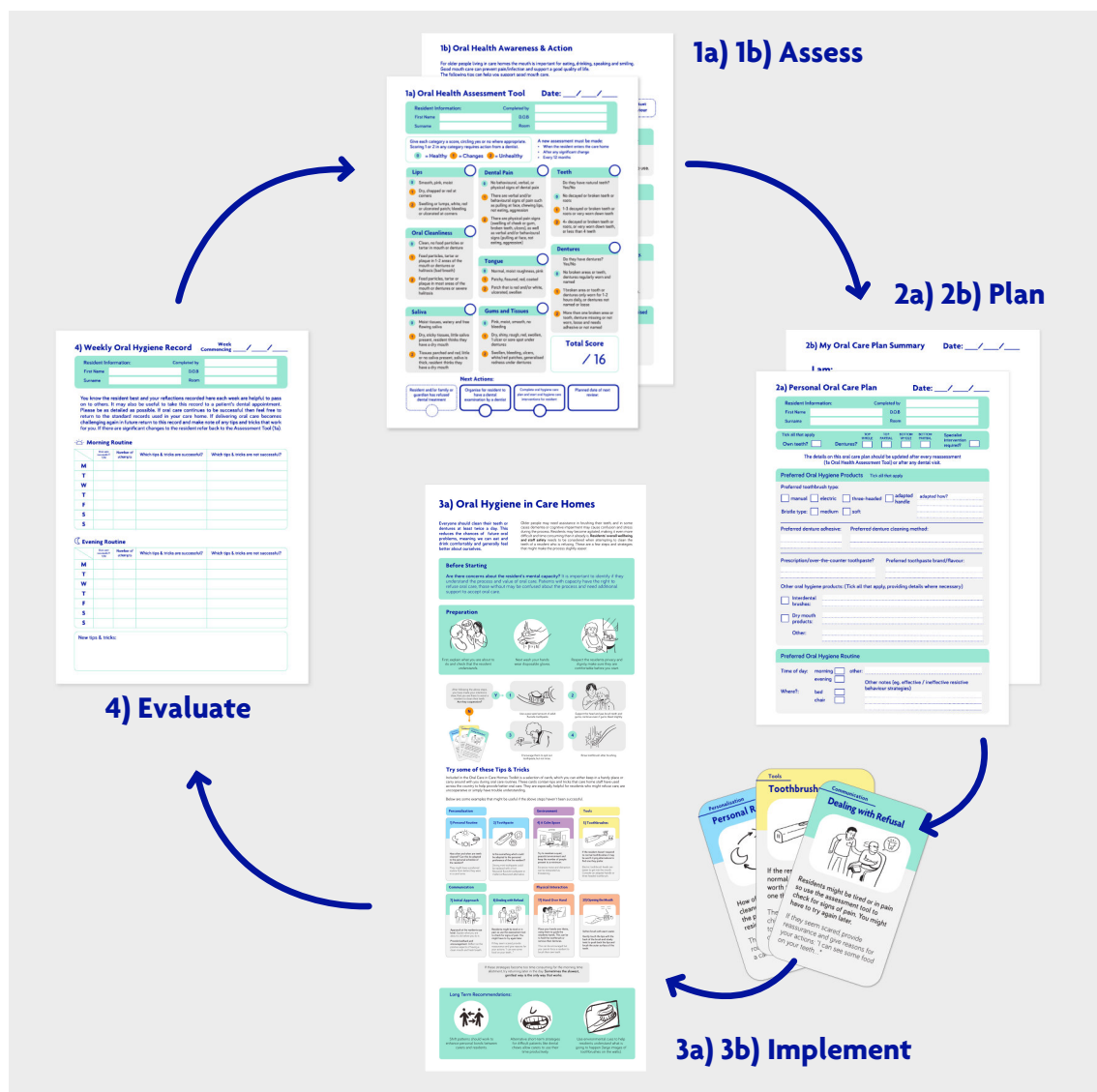
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User Guide

When a resident enters the care home for the first time they should have an Oral Health Assessment **(1a)** to begin to understand their specific needs, including any potential risks to their oral health **(1b)**. Once the assessment is complete this information can be used to create a formal plan **(2a)**. This will keep track of the residents preferences of products as well as routines that work for them. This is distilled into a more informal summary which can be kept in the residents room for easy access **(2b)**.

A guide on how to deliver oral care, especially to people who might resist it, is included as a poster that can be displayed in staff rooms and offices **(3a)**. This is combined with a set of Tips and Tricks Cards that collect useful strategies from care homes across the country **(3b)**.

Finally the residents oral health is monitored on a weekly basis with the Weekly Care Record, this is also a good place to record any tips and tricks that have improved care for this resident. This information can then be easily accessed by care home staff. When 12 months pass or if any significant change is noticed return to **1a** and deliver another assessment.



The Care Home Oral Care Toolkit

3a) Oral Hygiene in Care Homes

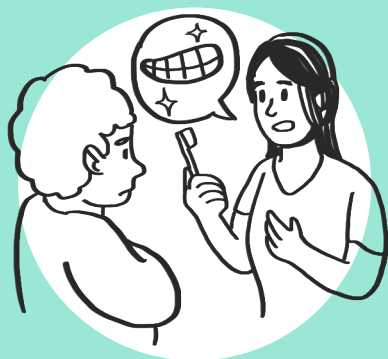
Everyone should clean their teeth or dentures at least twice a day. This reduces the chances of future oral problems, meaning we can eat and drink comfortably and generally feel better about ourselves.

Older people may need assistance in brushing their teeth, and in some cases dementia or cognitive impairment may cause confusion and stress during the process. Residents may become agitated, making it even more difficult and time consuming than it already is. **Residents' overall wellbeing and staff safety** needs to be considered when attempting to clean the teeth of a resident who is refusing. These are a few steps and strategies that might make the process slightly easier:

Before Starting

Are there concerns about the resident's mental capacity? It is important to identify if they understand the process and value of oral care. Patients with capacity have the right to refuse oral care, those without may be confused about the process and need additional support to accept oral care.

Preparation



First, explain what you are about to do and check that the resident understands.



Next wash your hands wear disposable gloves.



Respect the residents privacy and dignity, make sure they are comfortable before you start.

After following the above steps, you have made your intentions clear, that you are there to assist a resident to clean their teeth. **Are they cooperative?**

Y →

1



Use a pea sized amount of adult fluoride toothpaste.

2



Support the head and jaw, brush teeth and gums, continue even if gums bleed slightly.

N ↓



3



Encourage them to spit out toothpaste, but not rinse.

4



Rinse toothbrush after brushing.

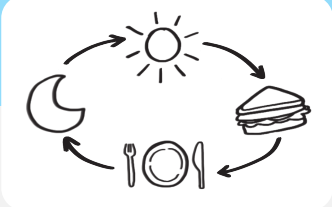
Try some of these Tips & Tricks

Included in the Oral Care in Care Homes Toolkit is a selection of cards, which you can either keep in a handy place or carry around with you during oral care routines. These cards contain tips and tricks that care home staff have used across the country to help provide better oral care. They are especially helpful for residents who might refuse care, are uncooperative or simply have trouble understanding.

Below are some examples that might be useful if the above steps haven't been successful.

Personalisation

1) Personal Routine

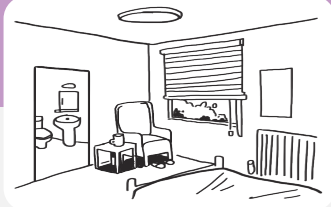


How often and when are teeth cleaned? Can this be adapted to the personal schedule of the resident?

They might have a preferred routine from before they were in a care home.

Environment

4) A Calm Space

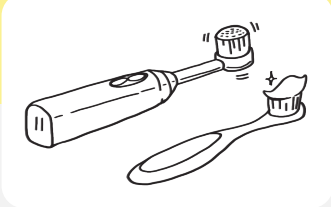


Try to maintain a quiet, peaceful environment and keep the number of people present to a minimum.

Excessive noise and distraction can be interpreted as threatening.

Tools

5) Toothbrushes



If the resident doesn't respond to normal toothbrushes it may be worth trying alternatives to find one they prefer.

Electric toothbrush heads are easier to get into the mouth. Consider an adapted handle or three headed toothbrush.

Communication

7) Initial Approach



Approach at the residents eye level. Explain what you are about to do before you do it.

Provide feedback and encouragement. Reflect on the positive aspects of having a clean mouth and fresh breath.

8) Dealing with Refusal

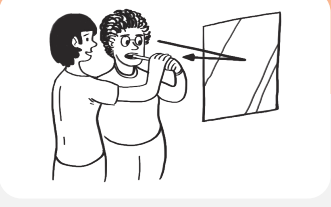


Residents might be tired or in pain so use the assessment tool to check for signs of pain. You might have to try again later.

If they seem scared, provide reassurance and give reasons for your actions: "I can see some food on your teeth..."

Physical Interaction

17) Hand Over Hand



Place your hands over theirs, using them to guide the residents hands. This can be to hold the toothbrush or remove their dentures.

This can be encouraged but you cannot force a resident to brush their own teeth.

20) Opening the Mouth



Soften brush with warm water.

Gently touch the lips with the back of the brush and slowly twist to push back the lips and brush the outer surface of the teeth.

If these strategies become too time consuming for the morning time allotment, try returning later in the day. **Sometimes the slowest, gentlest way is the only way that works.**

Long Term Recommendations:



Shift patterns should work to enhance personal bonds between carers and residents.



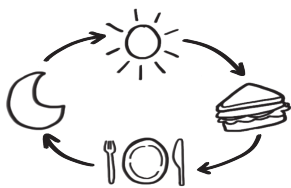
Alternative short-term strategies for difficult patients like dental chews allow carers to use their time productively.



Use environmental cues to help residents understand what is going to happen (large images of toothbrushes on the walls).

Personalisation

1) Personal Routine

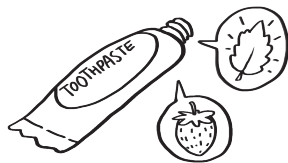


How often and when are teeth cleaned? Can this be adapted to the personal schedule of the resident?

They might have a preferred routine from before they were in a care home.

Personalisation

2) Toothpaste

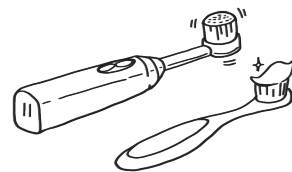


Is this something which could be adapted to the personal preference of the the resident?

Strong mint toothpaste could be replaced with a fruit flavoured fluoride toothpaste or milder/unflavoured alternative.

Tools

5) Toothbrushes

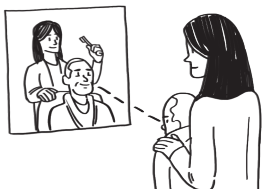


If the resident doesn't respond to normal toothbrushes it may be worth trying alternatives to find one they prefer.

Electric toothbrush heads are easier to get into the mouth. Consider an adapted handle or three headed toothbrush.

Tools

6) Mirrors



If you aren't in a bathroom environment try placing a mirror in front of the resident and standing behind them.

This helps them see their reflection clearly and undisturbed.

Communication

7) Initial Approach



Approach at the residents eye level. Explain what you are about to do before you do it.

Provide feedback and encouragement. Reflect on the positive aspects of having a clean mouth and fresh breath.

Communication

8) Dealing with Refusal



Residents might be tired or in pain so use the assessment tool to check for signs of pain. You might have to try again later.

If they seem scared, provide reassurance and give reasons for your actions: "I can see some food on your teeth..."

Communication

9) Smile



Smile as you interact with the resident, especially those with dementia.

Even neutral expressions have been shown to be interpreted as fearful.

Communication

10) Biting the Brush



Encourage them to open their mouth. Say "Ahhh" whilst gently rubbing the cheek to relax the jaw. Do not put your fingers in the way of the resident's bite.

Try combining this with card 21) Biting the Brush 2.

Communication

11) Avoid Baby Talk



Avoid high pitch, short sentences, sing-song voices and patronising tone.

Speak to residents as adults, avoid triggering any unnecessary reactions. Try combining this with card 12) One-Step Commands.

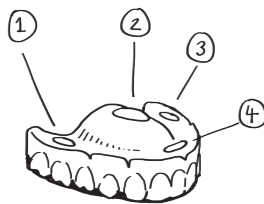
Oral Hygiene in Care Homes

Tips and Tricks

These cards contain tips and tricks that care home staff have used across the country to help provide better oral care. They are especially helpful for residents who might refuse care, are uncooperative or simply have trouble understanding.

Physical Interaction

15) Dentures



Dentures should be removed at least once a day. Take extra care as residents may bite.

Using 4 equally spaced dots of fixative or adhesive is enough to hold dentures in place and makes it faster and easier to remove them.

Physical Interaction

16) Physical Involvement

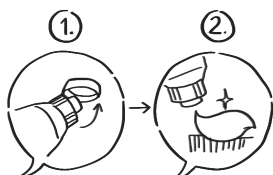


Have the resident hold the toothbrush, toothpaste or oral care items currently being used.

This can help access memories of being actively involved in their own oral care.

Communication

12) One-Step Commands



Use polite, one-step commands to keep communication simple.

People with dementia increasingly struggle to process verbal communication, so this helps prevent confusion.

Communication

13) Non-Verbal

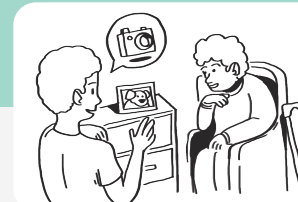


Use hand gestures and signalling with the hands to complement one-step commands.

People with dementia increasingly struggle to process verbal communication.

Communication

14) Distraction

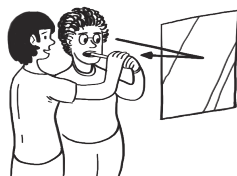


Sing, talk or draw attention to an object with personal meaning to the resident.

These calming techniques may distract residents from worrying too much about the process of teeth/denture cleaning.

Physical Interaction

17) Hand Over Hand

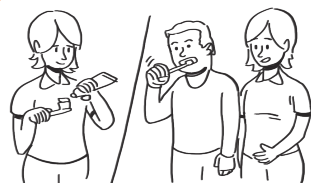


Place your hands over theirs, using them to guide the residents hands. This can be to hold the toothbrush or remove their dentures.

This can be encouraged but you cannot force a resident to brush their own teeth.

Physical Interaction

18) Initiate & Switch



Initiating oral hygiene with the expectation that the resident will complete the activity.

Self-care is seen to be far less threatening and invasive than someone else doing it.

Physical Interaction

19) Dealing with Aggression



Remember to remain calm. Come back later in the day when the aggression has passed.

If it continues, try another carer, notify the nurse in charge and refer to a dentist. Note any aggression on the weekly record.

Physical Interaction

20) Opening the Mouth



Soften brush with warm water.

Gently touch the lips with the back of the brush and slowly twist to push back the lips and brush the outer surface of the teeth.

Environment

4) A Calm Space

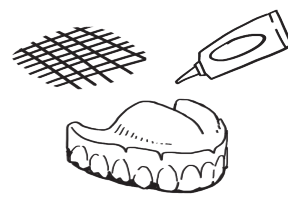


Try to maintain a quiet, peaceful environment and keep the number of people present to a minimum.

Excessive noise and distraction can be interpreted as threatening.

Personalisation

3) Denture Adhesive



Does the resident have a preference for how they want their dentures secured?

There are a range of fixative options available including tapes, webs and glues.

Your Tips & Tricks

Your Tips & Tricks

Your Tips & Tricks

Physical Interaction

21) Biting the Brush 2



Use a soft biting block or the soft handle of a second toothbrush during brushing.

Once the mouth is opened slightly a three-headed toothbrush can help reach more of the tooth.

Communication

10) Biting the Brush

Communication

11) Avoid Baby Talk