

Oral Health Tips for Caregivers

Oral Health Tips

Do you take care of an elderly parent or other older adult? If so, remember that a healthy mouth can help them enjoy food, chew better, eat well, and avoid pain and tooth loss.

Plaque puts a healthy mouth at risk. It can collect on teeth that aren't brushed well. The buildup can cause bad breath, tooth decay, and gum disease.

Some older adults need to be reminded to brush and floss teeth. Others may need help actually getting it done.

You can take steps to help make brushing easier. For example, try a power or multiple-sided toothbrush. You can also modify the toothbrush handle to make it easier to hold.

If older adults need help, remember to wash your hands and wear disposable gloves before you begin. Use the "tell-show-do" approach. Tell them what you are going to do, show them, and then do what you've described.

Regular dental visits are important too. At a dental visit, you can ask for ways to help the person you care for.

Caregiver Fact Sheets

The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research at NIH has a [series of caregiver fact sheets](#) to help caregivers learn more about protecting oral health in older adults.

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