

GET WISE

About Your Oral Health

Always Make Time for Senior Oral Health Care



Seniors receiving daily oral health care are more likely to avoid dental disease and enjoy a better quality of life.

- Maintaining a healthy mouth helps seniors eat properly and sleep well.
- Removing plaque from teeth before it can enter the bloodstream lowers the risk of blood clots, hardening of the arteries and blood sugar problems.
- Improving oral hygiene reduces the chances of getting pneumonia or dying from it.¹

Tips for caregivers:

- Always wash hands thoroughly.
- Brush and floss every day.
- Clean dentures daily, and remove each night.
- Help avoid dry mouth. Many medications can reduce the flow of saliva, increasing the risk of tooth decay.
- Check the mouth for any broken teeth or sores, blisters or lumps.

Did you know?

Ten percent of Americans over age 85 live in long-term care facilities.²



Quick bites

Caregivers should compile oral health histories on the older adults they assist. Here are some important questions to answer:

- Does the senior wear dentures? If so, are the dentures complete or partial?
- Who is the family dentist, and what is the contact information?
- When was the senior's last dental checkup?
- Is there a track record of any dental problems?
- What medications are currently being taken?
- What are the best ways for encouraging cooperation with oral hygiene? What has worked at home for family members?



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¹ Rosenblum, R, "Oral Hygiene Can Reduce the Incidence of and Death Resulting from Pneumonia and Respiratory Tract Infection," *Journal of the American Dental Association* 141, no. 9 (2010): 1117-118. ² Administration on Aging, "Profile of Older Americans: 2015—Living Arrangements," web.

