

Mouth Care

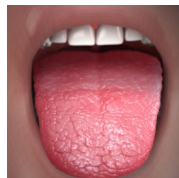


In their 'Smiling Matters' (2019) publication, The Care Quality Commission (CQC) indicate poor oral health to be the highest risk factor for care home residents developing aspiration pneumonia. It is also known to directly contribute to a decline in systemic health, due to bacteria entering the vascular system.

Common Issues around Mouth Care...

➔ Dry Mouth

Saliva is a protective, antibacterial substance. It lubricates the mouth for speaking and eating whilst maintaining the natural pH balance. An absence of this is known as dry mouth. Dry mouth contributes to halitosis, social withdrawal, thick secretions, and dental decay. Causes for dry mouth include; medications, alcohol, smoking, long term conditions such as diabetes, asthma, dementia and Parkinson's, and Use of oxygen.



➔ Prosthetics

Those with dentures or plates still require their mouth to be cleansed, as bacteria is still present. Dentures should be cleansed using a mild soap and warm water to remove plaque. Storing in water overnight is not advised, as this can cause bacteria build up. (For more info, see: [storing dentures \(kohc.co.uk\)](http://storing_dentures(kohc.co.uk)))

Before inserting prosthetics, you should check the oral cavity first, as prosthetics could cause sores or inflamed gums - or worsen pain from pre-existing issues. A dental review should be requested.

➔ Periodontal Disease

Also referred to as **Gum disease** and **gingivitis**. When assessing the oral cavity, care should be taken to examine soft tissues surrounding the teeth. Looking for signs of redness and inflammation of the gums, bleeding when brushing, and symptoms of pain on touch. Catching this early can help reduce tooth loss and also reduce systemic disease developing. For more information see video 1: [Periodontitis and General Health | BSP \(bsperio.org.uk\)](http://Periodontitis and General Health | BSP (bsperio.org.uk))



➔ Nil by Mouth



Residents may have been placed Nil by Mouth due to dysphagia and may have artificial feeding via a tube to meet nutritional needs. It is important to remember plaque can still occur in the absence of food, so those who are nil by mouth should still be placed on a robust mouth care regime.

➔ Modified Diet / Fluids

Those on a modified diet will require more regular mouth care to manually remove oral residue coating the teeth and gums. They may have reduced tongue movements preventing them from sweeping debris away. Those who require thickened fluids can also be left with oral residue on the teeth and gums, compared with thin fluids, which would typically wash debris off.



Challenges of Mouth Care

Offering mouthcare in a community setting is not without its challenges. These challenges can be caused by:

- Cognitive changes
- Physical impairment
- Dysphagia.

Whilst the CQC do not dismiss barriers, they **state these are not valid reasons for denying care**. If a resident is persistently resisting, this should be documented clearly and escalated to a health care professional, such as **specialist nurse, GP or dentist**.

Staff should be mindful of negative behaviours being a direct result of oral pain. Affected individuals may rely on non-verbal strategies or vocalisations, to communicate this.

- Information / contact details for dental services can be found on: <https://www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk/community-care/specialist-dental>
- TIPS and COPING STRATEGIES for people who resist Mouth Care can be found on: [Resource \(kohc.co.uk\)](http://Resource(kohc.co.uk))



Mouth Care Matters

Health Education England commenced an initiative called **Mouth Care Matters**, from which many resources and assessment tools can be found. Including those aimed at residential care home settings who may require a standardised assessment approach to documentation and care planning of mouth care.



“The Mouth Care Matters programme aims to create a healthcare team that is more responsive and personalised for patients and delivers better clinical outcomes, bringing an increased awareness of the importance of good mouth care and how it impacts on general health and quality of life.”

The initiative is relevant for all people who provide personal care to patients be that in an acute, care home or community setting.”

Mouth Care Products available:

➤ **Oralieve 360 toothbrush** – good for tongue scraping, reaching multiple surfaces of the mouth, removal of secretions and can be used for a 3-month period.



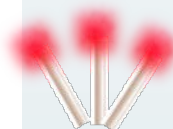
➤ **MC3 Mouth cleanser brush** – These are for removing secretions, coatings and oral residue. They only have a 12 hour period of use and are replacing the pink swab sponges previously in circulation.

➤ **Sodium Lauryl-Sulphate (SLS) free toothpaste** – This is a foam free toothpaste. SLS is the agent in tooth paste which causes it to foam/froth. It can build up in the mouth, causing risk to those with dysphagia. SLS can also cause irritation to open sores in the mouth.



➤ **Saliva replacement products** – such as Biotene, BioXtra and Oralieve. Please check product ingredients as some contain whey protein and some may not be suitable for vegans/vegetarians.

CAUTION!



Single use pink oral swabs are **no longer deemed suitable for use inside of the mouth**. If these are needed, please only use them on external areas, such as the lips and cheek. *Please check they are firmly connected to the stick.*

Training



Whilst there is no accredited training for mouth care in the U.K, there are multiple platforms from which care homes can seek it independently. For example, Knowledge Oral Health Care – who have an Oral champion training programme. There is also NHS England, who provide online webinars and guidance.

Resources and Signposting

Scanning the QR code will take you directly to the website



[Adult Dental Services | Livewell Southwest](#) – Contact details available on website



[Smiling matters: oral health care in care homes - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](#) – Smiling matters (2019). This has since been updated and a new publication due.



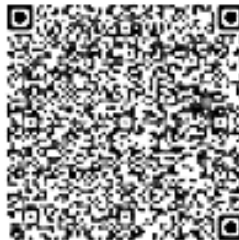
[Overview | Oral health for adults in care homes | Guidance | NICE](#) – National guidelines for oral care in residential settings.



[Home - Mouth Care Matters \(hee.nhs.uk\)](#) – Evidence based information and documentation templates related to mouthcare. With useful guidance provided online.



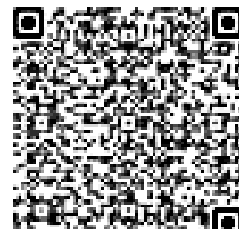
[Oral health toolkit for adults in care homes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) – live working document for care home guidance



[www.kohc.co.uk](#) – Knowledge Oral Health Care. For information related to all aspects of mouth care and training information for **Oral Health Champions** in care homes.



[www.bioxtra.co.uk](#) – This includes information leaflets and the opportunity to order free product samples.



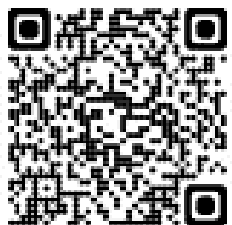
[Managing oxygen in care homes - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](#) – CQC 2022 publication



[Periodontitis and General Health | BSP \(bsperio.org.uk\)](#) – See Video 1.



[storing dentures \(kohc.co.uk\)](#) – information sheet



[Resource \(kohc.co.uk\)](#) – Tips and coping strategies for people that resist mouth care .