Mouth care advice for Care at Home services during the COVID-19 pandemic

Caring for Smiles

It is important that day to day mouth care should continue to ensure good oral health.

There may be anxiety about splashes, but wearing PPE will help carers continue to maintain the everyday health and care of the people they look after.

PPE for delivering mouth care

- Single use disposable apron
- Single use disposable gloves
- Fluid resistant face mask
- Eye/face protection

Further information on PPE for care at home services can be found in the guidance from Health Protection Scotland, https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/ Table 4 of the PPE guidance is relevant for providing mouth care in the care at home setting.

It is possible that some people might find PPE confusing or it may make them anxious. In that case, be patient and respectful, and try to find out what might help the person to feel more comfortable.

Mouth care

Encourage continued independence for people who are able to undertake their own oral care.

Prompt and support if required as follows:

- People with natural teeth
  - Natural teeth should be cleaned at least twice a day.
  - Use a pea-sized amount of adult fluoride toothpaste.
  - Brush teeth and gums (continue even if gums bleed slightly).
  - Encourage to spit but not rinse. Wipe face.
  - Rinse toothbrush after brushing.
- Manual toothbrushes would be preferable at this time in an effort to minimise droplets.
- People with dentures
  - Dentures should be rinsed after every meal.
  - At night, remove dentures from mouth.
  - Brush using a toothbrush and unperfumed soap or denture cream.
  - Soak the dentures in sterilising fluid for at least 20 minutes.
  - Then soak overnight in cold water.
- People with no natural teeth
  - Remember, the inside of the mouth still needs to be cleaned
  - Use a wet piece of non-fraying gauze to gently clean gums and tongue.

If you have a concern about a person's mouth that needs advice from a dentist, please contact the dentist that they are registered with in the first instance.
If the person you visit does not have a dentist, please contact the dental helpline for your health board, https://www.scottishdental.org/public/emergency-dental-services/
For out of hours dental emergencies please call NHS 24 on 111.