



# Keep My Teeth

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK  
SUPPORT PERSON

WRIGLEY  
Company Foundation



Trinity College Dublin  
National Institute for Research in  
Healthcare

St. Michael's  
House

Irish Society for  
Disability & Oral Health

## Participant Record

Name\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Instructor\_\_\_\_\_

Welcome to Keep My Teeth Support Person Training

This training is intended for:

- Support persons
- Family carers
- Managers and other professionals
- Persons who need support themselves

## Programme Objectives

Keep My Teeth Support Person Training has been designed to improve mouth care for people who need support. By the end of this programme you should be able to:

- Plan routine mouth care for people who need support
- Deliver routine mouth care for people who need support

## Your Participation

At the start of training, participants should let the tutor know if there is a reason that the person feels they are unable to participate in aspects of the course, for health or other reasons. Participants are asked to agree the following:

- Respect that all participants have valuable knowledge to add to the learning of the group and that information provided during the group should be respected.
- Be professional towards each other and those we support in applying these skills, within our professional codes of practice.

This training is delivered to you within an ethical and professional framework that is consistent with principles of best practice, inclusivity, person centeredness and creativity. This training emphasises the right to health, dignity and autonomy for all. You should use this training in a way that is consistent with your professional and organisational policies and guidance.

The pace may be a little faster than you are used to but you can watch the videos and read the workbook again any time you like on [www.brushmyteeth.ie](http://www.brushmyteeth.ie)

**Lastly, you will each be asked to complete a mouth care plan for / with a service user in the next week. We will go through that process together now and you can ask questions, so keep your service user in mind as we go through.**

We hope you enjoy your training.

## Questions in this workbook

1. *What are the benefits of mouth care?*
2. *What are your barriers to mouth care?*
3. *How to complete a mouthcare plan?*
4. *How to brush teeth?*
5. *How to document mouth care*
6. *Further Information*

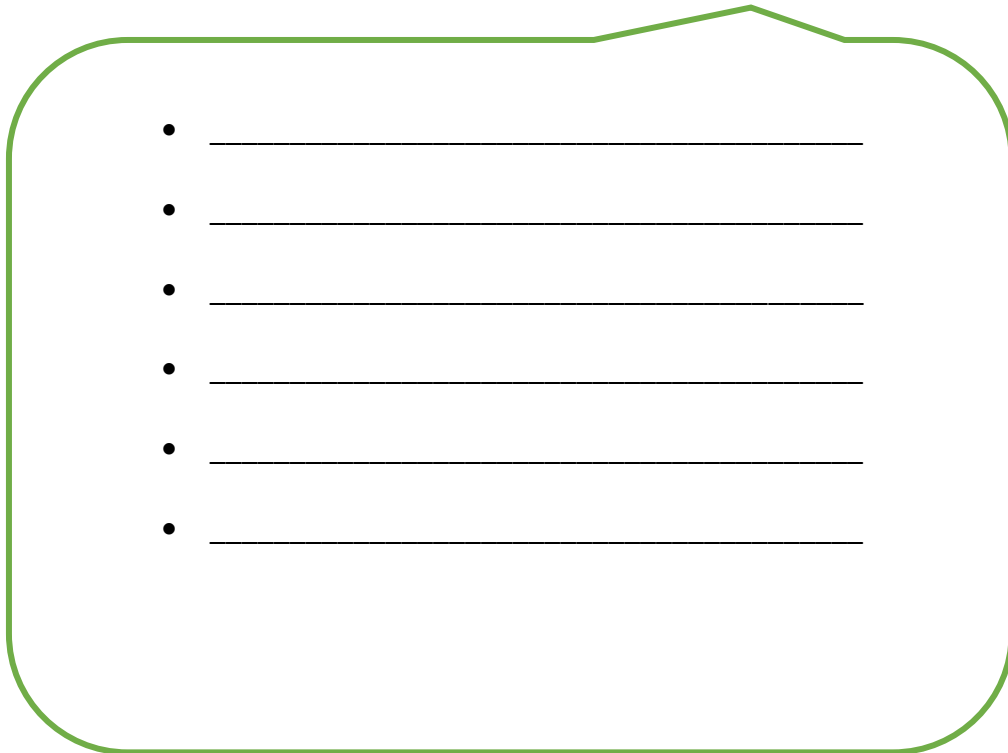
### 1. What are the benefits of mouth care?

- *This task is about the benefits of mouth care*
- *With a partner, list three reasons why mouth care is important*
- *You have two minutes*
- *Watch the video to see if there are any differences*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. What are your barriers to Mouth care?

- *This task is about barriers to mouth care*
- *In pairs, honestly discuss what are the barriers to mouth care that you experience in your support role?*
- *Discuss for five minutes*
- *Share to the group for ten minutes*



- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. How to complete a mouth care plan

Think about your service user and make any notes you find helpful here.

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### My Mouthcare Plan

Also complete the one page summary of your plan on page 12 as an easy reminder!




Find this form on [brushmyteeth.ie](http://brushmyteeth.ie)



Step 1 What are my mouthcare needs?



Step 2 What are my goals?



Step 3 What is my Action Plan?

4

### 4. How to brush teeth

Can you answer these questions for a service user who you care for?

Write any other helpful notes here

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**Question 1 – What type of toothbrush do you use?**

Normal    Electric    Special

☐
☐
☐



**Question 2 – How much help do you need to brush your teeth?**

No help    A little help    A lot of help

☐
☐
☐


The right video for me is No. \_\_\_\_




**Other things I can do to keep my teeth healthy**

You can circle the records that might be useful to your care


## Keep My Teeth – What steps can I do?



not possible





























































































might accomplish this





possible

circle

the most likely goal and the level of help needed

Steps	Needs a lot of help	Needs a little help	Needs no help
1. Get my toothbrush and toothpaste	   	  	 
2. Placing a pea size piece of toothpaste on my toothbrush	   	  	 
3. Brush all my upper teeth on the inside and outside surfaces	   	  	 
4. Brush all my lower teeth on the inside and outside surfaces	   	  	 
5. Brush the biting surfaces of my upper and lower teeth	   	  	 
6. Use a small circular movement when brushing	   	  	 
7. Spend at least 2 minutes brushing	   	  	 
8. Spit out all the toothpaste into the sink or container	   	  	 
9. Wipe my lips and face with a towel	   	  	 
10. Rinse my toothbrush under water and put it back where I keep it	   	  	 

	Steps	I need a lot of help	I need a little help	I don't need help
	Brush the biting surfaces of my upper and lower teeth			
	Use a small circular movement when brushing			
	Spend at least 2 minutes brushing			
	Spit out all the toothpaste into the sink or container			
	Wipe my lips and face with a towel			
	Rinse my toothbrush under water and put it back where I keep it			



## Looking after my dentures



This page will show how you look after your dentures. Tick the box when you have look after your dentures.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
 Rinse after meal							
 Leave out at night							
 Brush over sink							
 Soak over night							

You are the person responsible for looking after your dentures. You can sign here at the end of the week.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

// //

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Write any other helpful notes here

## 6. Next Steps

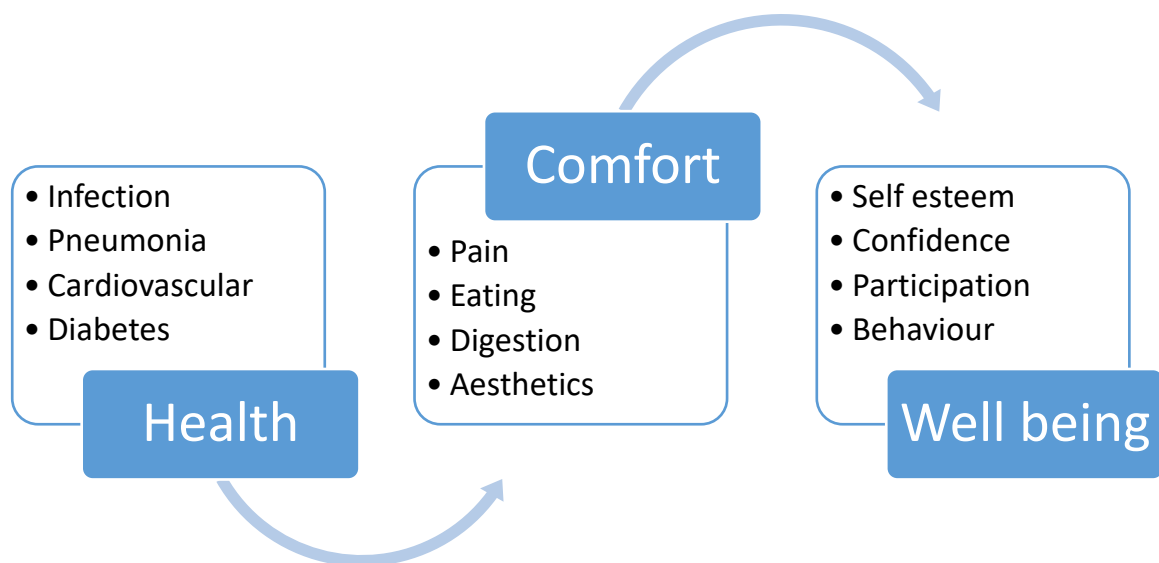
Write notes here

[illegible]

Thank you for participating. You can read our further information section if you have specific queries or visit our website at [www.brushmyteeth.ie](http://www.brushmyteeth.ie)

### 1. What are the benefits of mouth care?

Oral health is an inherent component of health that describes a multi-faceted and dynamic concept, which includes *the ability to speak, smile, smell, taste, touch, chew, swallow and convey a range of emotions through facial expressions with confidence and without pain, discomfort and disease of the craniofacial complex* <sup>1</sup>. Oral health influences general health, self-esteem, confidence and quality of life, potentially limiting social activity and restricting participation.



For people with intellectual developmental disabilities (IDD), oral diseases such as dental caries and periodontal disease hold significance. Unlike the general population, dental caries is often untreated or treated by extraction rather than conservatively <sup>2</sup>. Periodontal disease is often far more severe and extensive among adults with IDD compared to the general population <sup>3,4</sup> and is understood to be the leading cause of tooth loss in this population <sup>5</sup>. By the time adults reach older age, they are twice as likely to be without any teeth if they have an intellectual disability <sup>6</sup>.

Further, factors specific to people with IDD compound the impact of these inequalities. For example, poor oral hygiene and periodontitis are associated with increased risk of nosocomial pneumonia, cardiovascular diseases like heart attack and stroke and diabetes <sup>7,8</sup>. This is made worse when we think of the tendency among people with IDD who are already noted for high levels of multi-morbidity, polypharmacy, high dependency and frailty, particularly as they age <sup>9,10</sup>. Dental pain can also go undiagnosed or present behaviourally when communication is impaired <sup>11,12</sup>. Dental treatment also often necessitates restrictive supports such as anaesthesia, sedation or clinical holding, which introduces ethical issues, increases treatment complexity and extent, extends waiting times and increases severity of treatment <sup>13</sup>.



Daily oral hygiene is the cornerstone of oral health because the regular and effective removal of dental plaque prevents and is an essential component of the management of these oral diseases <sup>14 15</sup>. There are three important factors for the physical removal of plaque: Frequency and duration of cleaning, the tools applied (e.g. type of toothbrush, floss and dentifrice) and the technique used <sup>14</sup>.

In summary, oral diseases are preventable through effective mouthcare, a sensible diet and regular check-ups. These can be tricky but not impossible. People with disabilities can really benefit from support to keep their mouths healthy. That is why mouth care plans are important.


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## 2. What are the barriers to Mouth care?

In spite of the high frequency of tooth brushing often reported by people with IDD <sup>16 17</sup>, oral hygiene is consistently found to be poor among people with an intellectual disability <sup>18 16 19 20 21</sup>. So, the question naturally arises, why is oral hygiene so poor for this group and how can it be improved?

In essence, oral hygiene relies on behaviours like tooth brushing and flossing. Aspects that may facilitate or complicate such behaviours include caregiver support, specialized equipment, adaptations to oral hygiene routine <sup>22</sup>.

Other barriers commonly cited are listed in the box to the right.

- 
- Resistance to mouth care
  - Access for mouth care
  - Practical difficulty
  - Time pressure
  - Competing priorities
  - Ethical dilemmas
  - Demotivation
  - Lack of adherence over time

### 3. How to complete a mouth care plan

Mouth care involves planning and acting to maintain oral health. This can involve a variety of actions depending on the specific needs of the person such as visiting the dentist, brushing and flossing teeth, denture care, lubricating the mouth, modifying diet, modifying habits, like smoking and many others. This training focuses mainly on tooth brushing, although we acknowledge the broader set of actions that need planning and doing. There is space in the Mouth care plan to cover these topics more broadly.

A mouth care plan is an agreement about the actions needed to keep a mouth healthy. It should make clear: who needs to do what, where, when and how.

Mouth care plans can be completed in three steps:

1. **Assessment** is about identifying the problems that should be considered in the mouthcare plan
2. **Goal setting** means agreeing what you hope to achieve for the person by fixing these problems
3. **Action Planning** is about setting out exactly what needs to be done to meet these goals by deciding who needs to do what, where, when and how.

**My Mouthcare Plan**

Also complete the one page summary of your plan on page 12 as an easy reminder!

Find this form on [brushmyteeth.ie](http://brushmyteeth.ie)

Step 1 What are my mouthcare needs?

Step 2 What are my goals?

Step 3 What is my Action Plan?

## Tip Include others when making mouthcare plans.

The person's rights are at the centre of mouth care plans. So, what about involving others in mouth care plans? Where appropriate, mouth care plans can involve the person, family members and support team. When completing a mouth care plan, ask yourself, who should you involve to get this right in your setting, within your institutional policies and professional codes.

## Assessment

The first step in mouth care planning is assessment. This should be led by the key worker and the person. This lets you make a list of problems that need action. **Assessment is individual and should consider people's abilities, preferences and needs.** Your assessment should cover all problems that, together, you think are important. To assess, you can ask yourself:

- What does the person want addressed?
- Is the person able for self-care?
- Is brushing effective?
- Is the mouth healthy?
- Is the mouth dry?
- Are there any other relevant issues?

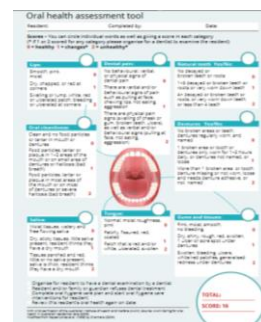
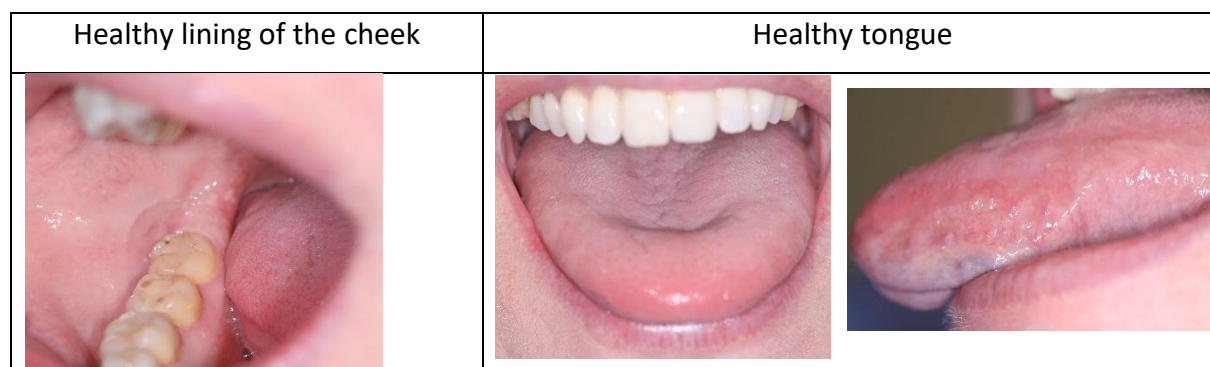
### How do I know if the mouth is healthy?

To find out if the mouth is healthy you can observe the mouth, preferably with a torch or good lighting. In reality this is a screening and does not mean a dental examination. If in doubt, talk to a dental team member. When screening, you should try and observe all hard and soft tissues of the mouth. Questions to keep in mind include:

### Is the lining of the mouth healthy or not?



When this tissue is healthy, it is normally pink, stippled and intact. Racial variants do arise. The mouth is a naturally lumpy place. The best way to keep an eye out for problems is to get used to what the mouth looks like in health.

Here are some pictures of healthy linings of the mouth. Notice they are pink and do not look swollen.



If you need guidance on screening the mouth, you can check out the Oral Health Assessment Tool that is frequently recommended for this purpose

<https://www.nice.org.uk/improving-oral-health-for-adults-in-care-homes>






Healthy floor of the mouth	Healthy palate (the lumps & bumps are normal)
	

Any ulcer, lump, bump or coloured lesion that is present more than seven – ten days should be seen immediately by a dentist. This is to ensure nothing sinister is afoot. Remember if ever in doubt, contact a dentist immediately.

### Tip Do not let things fester

It is important to consider organising a visit to a dentist or doctor if you find ulcers that last more than 10 days, pain or infection.

Some things to look for when assessing the mouth

ASSESSING	HEALTHY	NOT HEALTHY
The standard of brushing currently being done,		
The health of the gums,		
Whether there are any holes or dental decay in the teeth,		
Whether there are any sores or ulcers in the mouth		
Whether the mouth appears dry.		



Gum disease is preventable

Gingivitis describes swelling of the gingivae. This is normally due to plaque, the microflora that attach to and around the teeth. The presence of these bugs triggers an immune response that causes the gums to swell. Swollen gingivae appear red, enlarged and often bloody on touch. Gingivitis resolves with proper toothbrushing.

The inflammation that causes gingivitis, if not treated appropriately with toothbrushing, can progress into the deeper soft and boney tissues that hold in the teeth, causing the gum to

recede, the bone to resorb and ultimately, the teeth become loose, uncomfortable and fall out. This is periodontal disease, which is treated with toothbrushing supported by regular dental treatments like a "deep clean" or "scale and polish". Remember if ever in doubt, contact a dentist immediately.

Are the gums pink and tight (healthy) or red and swollen (unhealthy)?

Healthy gums	Unhealthy gums ( gum disease )
	

**Tip** Toothbrushing is the key to preventing and treating gum disease and periodontal disease.



Regular dental care can support this.



## Dental decay is preventable

Dental decay (cavities or caries) describes an infectious process whereby bugs in plaque metabolise sugar, producing acids. When sugars are consumed frequently, these acids destroy tooth structure by chemically reacting with the metal ions in teeth leaving softened tooth structure, which weakens and becomes cavitated. Decayed tooth structure often appears dark and broken. Dental decay progresses much more quickly in people with dry mouth.

Is there dental decay in the teeth?

Healthy teeth (notice the filling on a back tooth)	Dental decay (hole) on a premolar
	

**Tip** Reducing the frequency of sugary intake and effective toothbrushing are key to preventing dental decay.

Regular dental care can support this. Remember if ever in doubt, contact a dentist immediately.

## Goal Setting

At the end of assessment, you should have a list of problems that need to be addressed. Next, you need to set goals. Goals should address the list of problems you have prioritised. Goals are aims that are realistic and achievable. They should be agreed with others where appropriate.

Goals are personal, so they will be different for everyone. However, to help you understand what a goal looks like, here are some common examples:

- I want to spend longer tooth brushing
- I want to increase independence in tooth brushing
- I want to reduce sugar in my diet
- I want to arrange a dental check up

So, decide your goals. You can write them in the Mouth care plan. The next step is to make an action plan to achieve these goals.

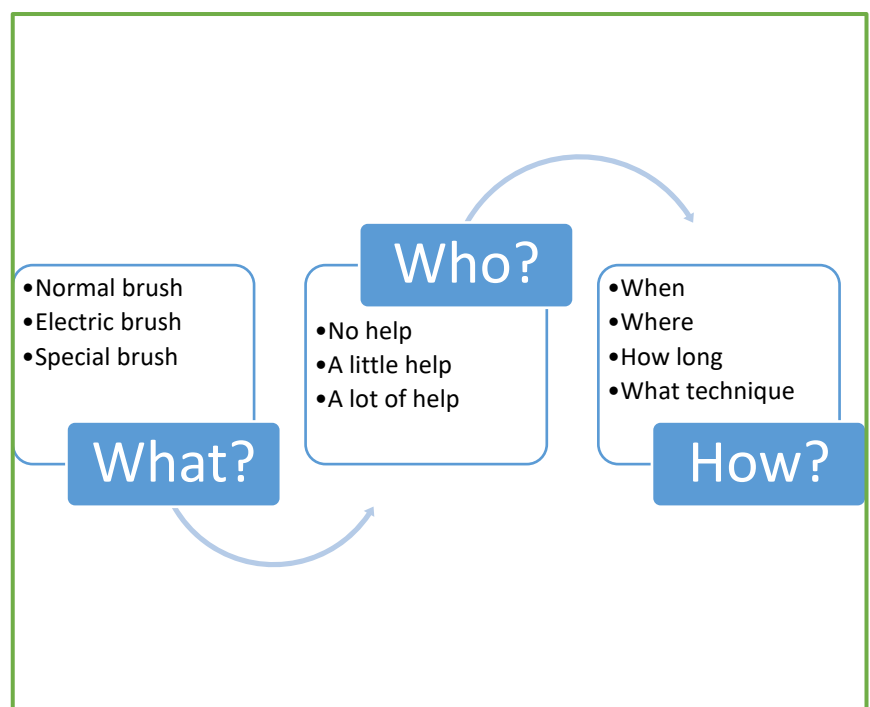
## Action Planning

An action plan will list the actions needed to achieve your goals. You should problem solve to find out the best way of meeting your goals.

This means asking yourself: Who will do what, where, when and how to achieve each goal.

Often the goal is better brushing. To Action plan for this goal you should consider the issues listed in the box to the right.

Note that the answer to *How should you brush teeth?* Is explored in section 5.



Further advice is available on [www.brushmyteeth.ie](http://www.brushmyteeth.ie)



## What toothbrush should I use?

There are different types of toothbrushes

Some people have no issues with tooth brushing and you could use any type of brush. Some people love gadgets so an electric toothbrush might work best. Sometimes the vibration is pleasant for people with hyposensitivity.

When compared head to head, standard brushes appear to be the least preferable toothbrush option for people with IDD <sup>28</sup>. If you are using a normal toothbrush go for one that is small and soft.

Research suggests that modified brushes like the Superbrush (now superseded by the *Dr Barman's Special Brush* in most instances) may be most effective at removing plaque and should be preferred over other brushes. This is particularly true for people who receive support for oral hygiene <sup>29 30</sup>. They can be more efficient than normal brushes, but you may need to be careful not to break them in the mouth as they may present swallowing risks. This, thankfully, is rare. Foam swabs are not recommended for this reason.

The options normally involve either a normal toothbrush, electric toothbrush or special brush

**Tip** Check out the [www.brushmyteeth.ie](http://www.brushmyteeth.ie) videos

Tooth brushing requires a specific technique, so make sure and check out our videos to show you how to use them. Why not weigh up the positives and negatives of different options? Don't forget you can contact your dental team for advice.

## Who should brush the teeth?

The answer could be: *The person themselves with no help* or *The person with a little help* or *The person with a lot of help*, this might include someone being completely supported to brush their teeth.

## When should tooth brushing happen?

We should brush twice a day but in some situations once a day works best. What time works best in your situation? You can seek advice if unsure

## **Tip You can choose how often you brush your teeth**

You should brush your teeth regularly. Most dental experts say twice a day. In the morning and the night. In some situations, like if the person finds toothbrushing difficult or needs a lot of help to brush their teeth well, this does not work out very well. For this reason it is sometimes better to brush once a day, with the emphasis on spending the right length of time, using the right brush and of course, the right technique. In specific situations it may be best to brush once every two days. If you have any doubts talk to a dental team.

### **How long should you brush for?**

Teeth should be brushed for two minutes or the length of a song. In reality, it can take shorter or longer depending on the person. What would work best in your situation? You can seek advice if unsure.

## **Tip You probably do need to brush your teeth better.**

The sorry truth is that we are all pretty bad at brushing our teeth. Even the best can miss about a third of their tooth surfaces when brushing. Children too are advised to have their teeth cleaned and later have supervision when brushing. There are lots of different ways in which we can get help. It may be as simple as watching a video, right up to having our teeth cleaned completely on our behalf. If you feel that someone you care for needs help, offer it or ask someone to help. Often there is a need to balance the need for health and the need for independence. If in doubt talk to a dental care professional and or other professionals within your organisation.

When you have considered all these elements you will have a detailed list of actions planned. You can write this on the mouth care plan. Each goal should have some action plans. You can ask for advice if unsure. Once the Action Plan is made, it is time for Action

#### 4. How to brush teeth

The second part of mouth care is action. Action involves completing the steps in the Action Plan with any support you need and recording these steps to check if the goals are being achieved.

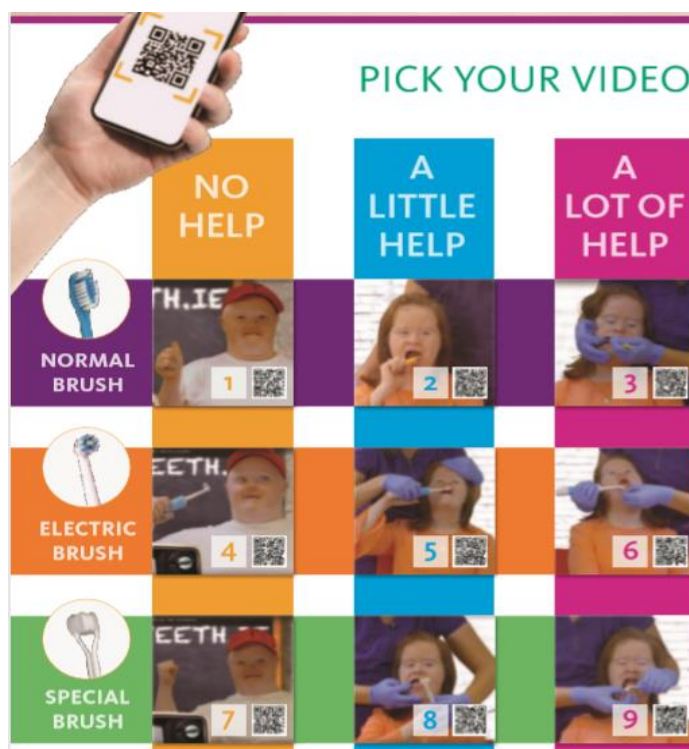
Tooth brushing is a cornerstone of mouth care. It should be done by balancing effectiveness, safety and acceptability. When brushing you should think about environment. This means picking the best time, length, support and place for the person. This also means letting the person know what is about to happen and working with them as you brush.

Based on the earlier answers about which toothbrush to use and the level of help needed, you can watch a video at [www.brushmyteeth.ie](http://www.brushmyteeth.ie) to find out how tooth brushing should be done. The grid presented here will let you select the right video. Go to [www.brushmyteeth.ie](http://www.brushmyteeth.ie) to find your

video. This video can be adapted to suit the person and any helpful tips should be written in the mouthcare plan. Examples of some tips include brush after brush or hand on hand. You can seek advice if unsure.

### Tip Keep safe when brushing

You do not need to be a healthcare professional to brush teeth but you do need to think about safety for everyone. Hands should be washed before and after and gloves should be worn. Where appropriate, you should use protective glasses or a visor when tooth brushing to make sure that you do not get any splashes into your eyes. You should make sure that your fingers are safe and that the person whose teeth are being brushed is not injured by brushing that is too hard or done with the wrong technique.



## Tip You can modify the video instructions to your needs

Everybody has their own way of cleaning their teeth, and what works for you may not work for others. So feel free to adapt the principles in the videos to plan your mouth care. We have demonstrated techniques that are based on evidence. This means that what we demonstrate might give you the best chance of getting it right.

## Tip Figure out which video works best in your situation

This means figuring out which technique is cleanest, quickest and safest for you. This might mean making changes! If you decide to use a normal toothbrush then you should watch Video 1, 2 or 3 depending on how much help you need. If your brush is electric, then you should use videos 4, 5 or 6. If you use a special brushes then you should look at videos 7, 8 or 9.

### 5. How to document mouth care

 **Keep My Teeth Mouthcare Plan**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What needs to be looked after in my mouth 	My Goals 	What I will do 	The help I need 	How to show I am doing this? 

Keep this form where you brush your teeth and can see it

You should document both the mouth care plan and daily mouth care.

#### Documenting the mouth care plan

A Mouthcare plan assures best practice of documenting mouth care needs for all people in residential care.

A mouthcare plan should be undertaken for everyone. This can be added to the personal care plan. You can use the [www.brushmyteeth.ie](http://www.brushmyteeth.ie) Mouthcare Plan to record all aspects of mouth care planning including

assessment, goals and action plan. You can also record other information on tooth brushing, dental care and diet as well as information about dental visits. The mouth care plan **summary sheet** can be used helpfully to summarise this process.

Other items for documenting may include: Progress along steps of independent care; Frequency of tooth brushing; Support for tooth brushing; Diet change; Dental attendance.

## Keep My Teeth – What steps can I do?

= not possible    
 = might attempted this    
 = possible

**circle** the most likely goal and the level of help needed

Steps	Needs a lot of help	Needs a little help	Needs no help
1. Get my toothbrush and toothpaste			
2. Placing a pea size piece of toothpaste on my toothbrush			
3. Brush all my upper teeth on the inside and outside surfaces			
2. Brush all my lower teeth on the inside and outside surfaces			
3. Brush the biting surfaces of my upper and lower teeth			
4. Use a small circular movement when brushing			
5. Spend at least 2 minutes brushing			
1. Spit out all the toothpaste into the sink or container			
2. Wipe my lips and face with a towel			
3. Rinse my toothbrush under water and put it back where I keep it			

Mouthcare plans, summary sheets, daily records and task analysis records are downloadable at [www.brushmyteeth.ie](http://www.brushmyteeth.ie)

### Tip Document mouth care daily

[illegible]

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