Providing Dental Care for Older Adults in Long Term Care

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Direct Care Staff will be able to:

1. Discuss why good dental health promotes overall health and quality of life
2. Describe the potential benefits to nursing care delivery when daily dental care is maintained
3. Discuss plaque bacteria and how prevention can protect the mouth from damage caused by plaque
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Direct Care Staff will be able to:

4. Identify ways to control plaque in older persons that are functionally dependent and cognitively impaired

5. Identify visible dental problems that should be reported to the nurse or other healthcare provider who might refer to the dentist

Why is Oral Health Important?

Dental disease is common in the nursing home and homebound population
The mouth is a mirror of health and disease

Signs can be seen in the mouth
- Systemic Disease
- Bacterial and Fungal Infections
- Nutritional Deficiencies

Importance of Dental Health to Overall Health and Well-Being

Poor dental health can make other problems worse
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Diabetes
- Malnutrition
- Stroke
- Pneumonia
Importance of Dental Health to Overall Health and Well-Being

Dental Infections

Body Infections

Importance of Dental Health to Well-being and Quality of Life

Consequences of Poor Oral Health

- Poor self-esteem
- Decreased social interaction
- Problems with eating
- Problems with sleeping
- Problems with speech
- Mouth pain
Common Dental Problems Seen in Long Term Care

- Gum Disease
- Dental Cavities
- Sores in the Mouth
- Ill-fitting Dentures
- Little Saliva

Special Problems of Dry Mouth

*Increase risk of dental cavities, gum disease and infection*

- Difficulty eating
- Difficulty swallowing
- Difficulty speaking
- Altered taste
- Ill-fitting dentures
What is PLAQUE?

*Bacteria from food and sweets not completely removed from teeth and dentures on a daily basis causes plaque*

- Plaque starts as a soft sticky film
- Plaque becomes rock hard (calculus) over time

Consequences of Plaque Bacteria

- Gum Disease (Periodontal Disease) leading to tooth loss
- Dental Cavities
- Respiratory Disease

*It is plaque, not aging, that causes tooth loss*
Direct Care Staff are IMPORTANT

You can prevent the older person’s decline in health with daily dental hygiene care

Daily Mouth Care

BENEFITS to Older Adults and Direct Care Staff

- Minimize medical problems
- Enhance quality of life
- Enhance cooperation
- Enhance nursing care delivery
Importance of Dental Health to Overall Health and Well-being

- Plaque Bacteria
- Dental Infections
- Body Infections
- Quality of Life

Oral Health Care Delivery

- How can I better provide dental care?
- Are there special products that will help me to do a better job with daily mouth care?
- Are there any tips that will help me to provide mouth care for an older person that is uncooperative?
WE CAN CONTROL DENTAL DISEASES

- Daily Plaque Removal
- Functional, Physical, and Cognitive Impaired Older Adults

WE CAN CONTROL DENTAL DISEASES

- Older adults with Natural Teeth
- Cognitively Impaired Older Adults with Natural Teeth
- Denture Care
SUGGESTED PLAQUE CONTROL
*Older Adults with Natural Teeth*

**Toothbrushing**
*Removes plaque on the surface of teeth*
- Soft toothbrush
- Circular motion
- Brush for 2 minutes
- Massage gums

**Flossing**
*Removes plaque between teeth and under the gums*
- Up and down motion
- Careful not to cut into gums
SUGGESTED PLAQUE CONTROL

Brushing and flossing together thoroughly clean teeth and prevent dental cavities, gum disease and tooth loss.

User Friendly Dental Hygiene Aids
Removing Plaque on Tooth Surfaces

Easier to Do Dental Care

Collis Curve Toothbrush

Electric and Manual Toothbrush
User Friendly Dental Hygiene Aids
Removing Plaque on Tooth Surfaces

Easier to Do Dental Care

Toothette

User Friendly Dental Hygiene Aids
Removing Plaque Between Teeth

Floss Holders and Disposable Floss

Proxa-brush

Stimudents
User Friendly
Dental Hygiene Aids

Helps To Keep Mouth Open

- Safety
- Control
- Comfort

Mouth Prop

User Friendly
Dental Hygiene Aids

Helps To Keep Mouth Open

- Make mouth prop
- Tongue depressors
- Gauze
IMPORTANCE of Oral Health Care

Plaque Bacteria

Dental Infections

Direct Care Staff

Body Infections

Identify Visible Dental Problems

Quality of Life

Regular Daily Dental Hygiene Care

Older Adults Able to Do Self-Care

Dental Health Care Aids

- Electric Toothbrush
- Regular Toothbrush
- Floss Holding Devices

How Direct Care Staff Can Assist

- Make sure dental health care aids are readily available for use
Older Adults Able to Do Self-Care

Mild to Moderate Physical Impairment or Mild Cognitive Impairment

Dental Health Care Aids
- Electric Toothbrush
- Adapted Toothbrush
- Collis Curve Toothbrush
- Floss Holding Devices

How Direct Care Staff Can Assist
- Encourage as much self care as possible
- Remind often for those with cognitive impairment
- Check to ensure thorough cleaning

Older Adults Able to Do Self-Care

Moderate Cognitive Impairment

Dental Health Care Aids
- Electric Toothbrush
- Adapted Toothbrush
- Collis Curve Toothbrush
- Floss Holding Devices

How Direct Care Staff Can Assist
- Can Follow Directions:
  - Constant reminding
  - Break up the steps for cleaning into simple steps
  - Post step-by-step instructions on mirror and label mouth supplies
Older Adults Unable to Do Self-Care

**Severe Physical and/or Cognitive Impairment**

### Dental Health Care Aids
- Foam Mouth Prop
- Electric Toothbrush
- Collis Curve Toothbrush
- Floss Holding Devices

### How Direct Care Staff Can Assist
- Regular time for dental care each day for cognitive impaired
- Prior to care, explain cleaning process in a gentle and calm manner for cognitive impaired

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Severe Cognitive Impairment

### Dental Health Care Aids
- Foam Mouth Props
- Gauge wrapped tongue depressor
- Toothette
- Floss Holding Devices
- Electric Toothbrush
- Collis Curve Toothbrush

### How Direct Care Staff Can Assist
- May require two caregivers:
  - One to distract the person and the other to provide care
  - DO NOT force care

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Resistant to Care

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Not Resistant to Care
DENTURE CARE

Plaque will also form on dentures and partial dentures

DENTURE SAFETY

- Dentures should be labeled with the name or initials of the person
- Dentures are easy to misplace
Denture Hygiene Care

- Dishwashing Detergent
- Denture brush or hard nailbrush
- Running water / washcloth in sink
- Denture cleaner tablets
- Denture paste

Denture Storage Container Care

- Cleaned weekly
- Diluted bleach
- Soak 1 hour
- Rinse thoroughly
**DENTURE CARE**

- Dentures should NOT be worn 24 hours a day
- Leave out at least 6 hours per day

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**Older Adults Able to Do Self-Care of Dentures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dental Health Care Aids</th>
<th>How Direct Care Staff Can Assist</th>
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<td>- Denture Brush</td>
<td>- Make sure denture supplies are readily available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cleaning Tablets</td>
<td>- Check weekly sanitation of denture storage container</td>
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**Older Adults Unable to Do Self-Care**

*Physical or Cognitive Impairment*

**Dental Health Care Aids**
- Denture Brush
- Cleaning Tablets

**How Direct Care Staff Can Assist**
- Physically clean dentures daily
- Remove dentures at night and store in container with water
- Weekly cleaning of denture container

**Signs of Dental Problems To Report**
- Broken teeth
- Loose teeth
- Brown areas and dark staining
- Bleeding gums
- Ill-fitting dentures
Early Signs of Oral Cancer to Report

- Swellings
- Red or White Patches
- Sores
- Numbness
- Lumps

_Early oral cancer may be present even without pain_

IMPORTANCE of Oral Health Care

- Plaque Bacteria
- Dental Infections
- Direct Care Staff
- Caregiver
- Body Infections
- Identify Visible Dental Problems
- Quality of Life
- Regular Daily Dental Hygiene Care
Summary of Objectives

You will now be able to:

• Discuss why good dental health promotes overall health and quality of life
• Describe the potential benefits to nursing care delivery when daily dental care is maintained
• Discuss plaque bacteria and how prevention can protect the mouth from damage caused by plaque
• Identify ways to control plaque in older persons that are functionally dependent and cognitively impaired
• Identify visible dental problems that should be reported to the nurse or other healthcare provider who might refer to the dentist

References

Guay AH. The oral health status of nursing home residents: what do we need to know? Journal Dental Education 2005;1015-1017.


References


Thank you for your attention!

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