



# Building Better Oral Health Communities

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## Better Oral Health in Home Care Facilitator Guide

### Activity 3: Understanding the mouth



**Government of South Australia**  
SA Health



Building Better Oral Health Communities

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## Better Oral Health in Home Care

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### Disclaimer

While every effort was made to ensure the information was accurate and up to date at the time of production, some information may become superseded as future research and new oral hygiene products are developed. In addition, the information in this resource is not intended as a substitute for a health professional's advice in relation to any oral health issues of concern.

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# Activity 3 Answers

## Understanding the mouth

### Instructions

#### Read

##### Read Better Oral Health in Home Care Part 1

Refer to:

- Care of natural teeth
- Relief of dry mouth
- Tooth friendly eating
- Seeing a dental professional
- Reporting oral health changes.

#### Watch

##### Watch Videos

It starts with the mouth (9 minutes)

Oral health self-learning quiz (5 minutes)

Oral health assessment (5 minutes).

[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/oralhealthforolderpeoplevideos](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/oralhealthforolderpeoplevideos)



#### Answer

1. Describe the makeup of a tooth.

- The outside of the tooth is made of a crystal and one part of the crystal is calcium.

2. How does decay occur?

- When you eat something that is sugary or has starch in it, bacteria in your mouth convert the sugars and starches into acid and the acid starts to dissolve away your tooth
- The calcium escapes into the saliva and if that happens too often, you get a hole in your tooth.

3. What is the benefit of fluoride?

- The calcium can get back into the tooth if there is fluoride in your saliva
- The fluoride then gets trapped into the crystal and is then a bit stronger than it was before.

4. How can you encourage and assist a client to protect their teeth?

##### Care of natural teeth

- Brush their teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste
- Spit but don't rinse after brushing with fluoride toothpaste
- If the client finds this difficult to accept not rinsing, wipe a little bit of toothpaste on their front teeth after they rinse.

##### Tooth friendly eating

- Dairy products such as plain milk, yoghurt and cheese
- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Sugar free with the tooth friendly symbol
- Drink plain tap water to rinse the mouth after eating.



### **Relief of dry mouth**

- Keep their mouth moist by frequently sipping plain tap water
- Apply a water-based lip balm
- Apply dry mouth products as recommended
- Suck on sugar free lollies or gum. Look for the 'tooth friendly' symbol
- Avoid dry or salty or spicy foods
- Reduce amount of sugary food or drinks, juices, tea or coffee they have.

5. What oral health changes would you report to the care coordinator?

### **Lips**

- Dry, chapped or red at corners of mouth.

### **Tongue**

- A coated, red or sore tongue.

### **• Gums and oral tissue**

- Bleeding gums
- Ulcers and sore spots
- Swollen face.

### **Saliva**

- Complaints of dry mouth
- Lack of saliva
- Saliva is thick or stringy
- Difficulty with eating and or speaking.

### **Natural teeth**

- Broken or discoloured teeth
- Loose teeth
- Tooth sensitivity.

### **Dentures**

- Refusal to wear denture
- Loose dentures
- Broken denture.

### **Oral cleanliness**

- Build-up of dental plaque/calculus on teeth
- Unclean dentures
- Food left in mouth
- Constant bad breath.

### **Dental pain**

- Complains of dental pain
- Refuses oral care
- Changes in behaviour (irritable, restless)
- Appears to have lost weight.

### **Emergency**

- Swollen face
- Uncontrollable pain
- Uncontrollable bleeding
- Trauma.

6. What other changes would you report?

#### **Bathroom**

- No toothbrush or toothpaste
- Toothbrush and toothpaste not used
- Toothbrush frayed
- Blood on toothbrush or in basin.

#### **Kitchen**

- Increased food wastage in bin
- Increased left-over meals in fridge.

#### **Shopping**

- Oral health care products not on list
- Replace toothbrush every 3 months.

#### **Meal Preparation**

- Difficulty eating or not finishing meals
- Change in food preferences.

7. Describe the 6 Question Oral Health Assessment Tool.

A 'yes' to any of these means the client needs to see a dentist.

1. Do you have any of your own natural teeth?
2. Have you had pain in your mouth while chewing?
3. Have you lost any fillings or do you need a dental visit for any other reason?
4. Have you avoided laughing or smiling?
5. Have you had to interrupt meals?
6. Have you had difficulty relaxing?

8. What are the 8 categories of oral health checked as part of the Oral Health Assessment Tool?

1. Lips
2. Tongue
3. Gums and oral tissue
4. Saliva
5. Natural teeth
6. Dentures
7. Oral cleanliness
8. Dental pain.

9. What does a client need to be eligible for public dental care?

- A current Centerlink pension or health care card.

10. What information and support considerations are required to help prepare a client for a dental appointment?

- Dental appointment time
- Transport
- Escort
- Consent
- Current medical history
- List of current medications
- Take Webster pack with them to the dentist
- Is an interpreter required?
- Is wheelchair access required?
- If the client is eligible for public dental care they must take their Medicare card and their pension card or health care card with them
- If the client is going to a private dentist they must have their private health care card, or gold DVA card and or the ability to pay
- If the client is unable to attend the appointment, to let the dental clinic know and to reschedule for another time.

