



Building Better Oral Health Communities

Better Oral Health in Home Care Facilitator Guide

Facilitator Power Point presentation notes



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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With acknowledgement

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The Building Better Oral Health Communities Project was led by SA Dental Service in collaboration with:

- Helping Hand Aged Care Inc SA
- Aboriginal Elders & Community Care Services Inc SA
- BaptistCare NSW & ACT
- Hunter New England Oral Health, NSW
- The University of Adelaide, SA - School of Nursing & ARCPOH.

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was made to ensure the information was accurate and up to date at the time of production, some information may become superseded as future research and new oral hygiene products are developed.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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Slide 1



Room preparation

Ensure there is enough comfortable seating and the audience can easily see the PowerPoint presentation and AV resource.

Please give yourself enough time to set up

Make sure you know how to use the computer and projector and note if you need speakers so the audience can hear the AV resource.

Start session

Introduction and welcome

Distribute pre-quiz

Better Oral Health in Home Care resource:

- copies ready for distribution
- ensure audience knows how to access the materials on the internet.

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Acknowledgement

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Slide 3

Overview

- Good oral health and healthy ageing
- Good oral health begins at home
- Encouraging better oral health care

In looking at ways to improve older people's oral health this introduction to Better Oral Health in Home Care will cover the following topics:

- Oral health and healthy ageing
- Good oral health begins at home
- Encouraging better oral health care.

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Slide 4

Oral health & healthy ageing

Suggested activity

Take a few moments to reflect on what oral health means to the audience.

Is oral health something that is important to you?

- on a scale from 1 (not important) to 10 (very important) how do you rate your own oral health and that of your family?
- when caring for older people is this something you think about? Where on the scale of 1 -10 would you rate this?

Alternative activity

Turn to the person next to you:

- discuss what is your understanding of oral health.
- list 5 things that are important about oral health.

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Oral health

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

When we talk about oral health, it means more than just teeth.

There are 8 categories to consider.

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No matter how old we are, having good oral health is important to be able to eat, talk comfortably, smile, feel happy with the way you look and be free of dental pain.

Increasingly older people are keeping their natural teeth and have complex mouths with crowns, bridge work, partial dentures and implants. The more complex the mouth the more difficult it is to maintain good oral health particularly when an older person is less able to care for themselves.

We know that oral health can deteriorate rapidly especially during the year or so before an older person enters residential aged care.

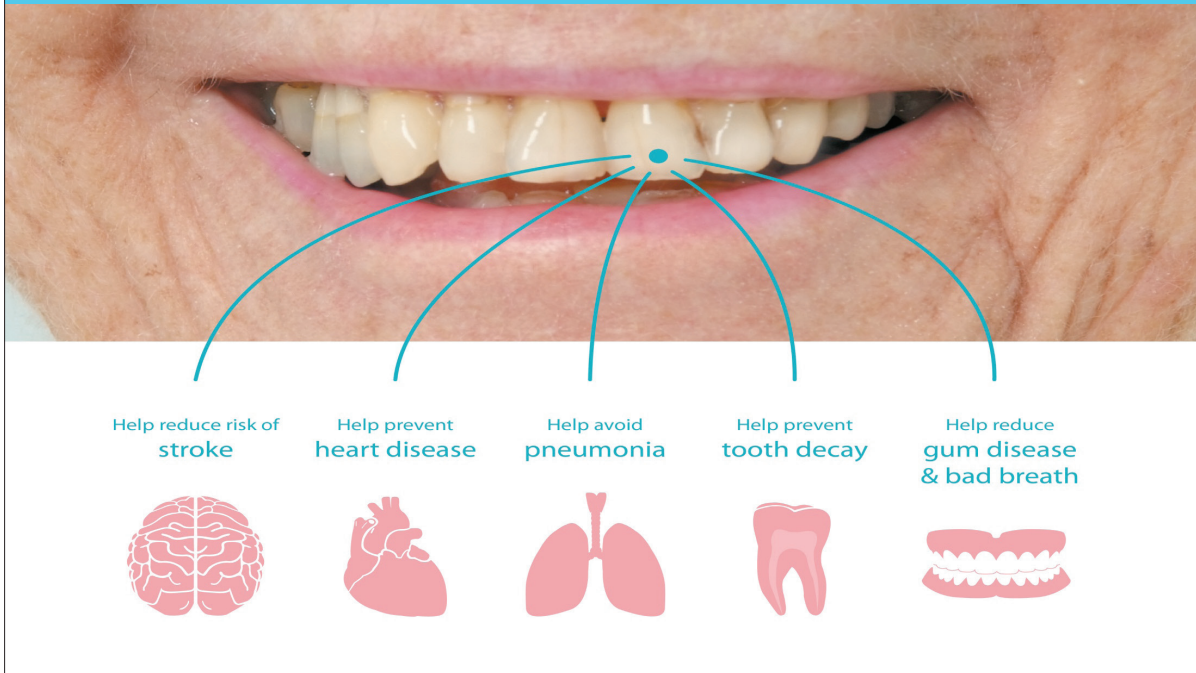
This makes older people more susceptible to oral infections such as tooth decay, gum disease and oral thrush. Some of their medications may also contribute to dry mouth.

While it is important to see a dentist on a regular basis, attention to daily oral care is one of the best ways to help maintain good oral health.

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A healthy mouth will improve overall health and wellbeing



The mouth is part of the body. The same blood that circulates through the mouth also circulates through the rest of the body.

So it makes sense that germs or infections from the mouth can spread to other parts of the body and impact on general health.

For example:

- links to heart disease
- stroke
- chest infections/ aspiration pneumonia
- it can also complicate the management of other diseases such as diabetes, chronic heart failure and chronic respiratory diseases.
- oral health therefore is not only important to a person's quality of life but also their general health and wellbeing.

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It takes a team approach

1. Oral health assessment
2. Oral health care plan
3. Daily oral care
4. Dental treatment

If we recognise oral health and general health are related, then it is time to put the mouth back in the body and make it part of what we do every day when we care for older people.

We also know that older people see a range of health workers more often than they see a dentist.

Therefore it makes sense that we can provide better oral health care if we adopt a multidisciplinary team approach and share roles and responsibilities.

We all play a part in supporting 4 key oral health processes:

1. oral health assessment - GP, RN, care coordinator
2. oral health care planning – RN or care coordinator, client and family
3. daily oral care – home care worker, client and family
4. referral for dental treatment – care coordinator, home care worker, client and family.

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Home care worker role

1. Encourage better oral health
2. Assist or remind about daily oral care
3. Report changes to RN or care coordinator

Your role as a home care worker is a very important one.

Whether you are assisting with personal care, such as showering and dressing or with shopping, cleaning or meal preparation you are in a great position to notice changes in a client's oral health status.

You can encourage and support clients to maintain better oral health by:

- encouraging and supporting better oral health
- assisting or reminding about daily oral care
- reporting the changes to the care coordinator.

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Good oral health begins at home

Suggested activity

Take a few moments and ask the audience to self reflect on how they look after their own oral health.

This is to set the scene for the next slides on how home care workers can encourage and support older people to maintain good oral health.

Brushing teeth

- How often do you brush your teeth?
- What type of toothbrush do you use?
- What type of toothpaste do you use?

Food and drink

- Do you think about what you eat and how that may affect your oral health?

Going to the dentist?

- When was the last time you had a dental check up?
- Do you only go to the dentist when you have a problem?
- What stops you from seeing the dentist?

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Care of natural teeth

Teeth are mainly made up of minerals including calcium.

When food is eaten, bacteria in dental plaque convert sugars and starches into acid, which can dissolve the minerals out of teeth.

If teeth are not cleaned, this can lead tooth decay, infections and pain.

Good oral care is extremely important to help avoid tooth decay. Fluoride toothpaste helps strengthen teeth as well as reverse the effects of the acid produced by the bacteria in dental plaque.

Bacteria in dental plaque also contribute to gum disease. Severe gum disease results in the breakdown of gums and bone that support the teeth causing tooth loss and pain. This affects general health and wellbeing.

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Care of natural teeth

- Brush twice a day
- Use a soft toothbrush
- Use a pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste
- Spit but don't rinse
- Replace toothbrush every 3 months

You can encourage and support clients to:

- brush their teeth, gums and tongue twice a day
- use a soft toothbrush
- use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste
- spit but don't rinse after brushing
- replace the toothbrush every 3 months.

This is important because:

- brushing is the best way to remove dental plaque
- a soft toothbrush is gentle on the gums
- fluoride toothpaste protects teeth
- not rinsing allows fluoride to be absorbed by the teeth
- a frayed toothbrush is not effective.

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Care of dentures

Many problems can occur for people who wear dentures.

If dentures are not removed, allowing for the tissues to rest, infections such as thrush or denture sore mouth can develop.

Poorly fitting dentures can also lead to soreness or cracking at the corners of the mouth.

Over time dentures can wear out and the shape of the gums and jaws change.

Because of this dentures may need to be relined or remade to cater for these changes.

Reduced saliva flow can also affect the ability to wear dentures comfortably.

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Care of dentures

- Brush twice a day
- Use a denture brush with mild liquid soap or a denture paste to clean, then rinse well
- Use a soft toothbrush for gums & tongue
- Put cleaned dentures in a container of fresh water overnight
- Use a denture soaking tablet to disinfect dentures

You can encourage and support clients to:

- brush dentures twice a day
- use a denture brush with mild liquid soap or a denture paste to clean, then rinse well
- use a soft toothbrush to clean gums and tongue
- put cleaned dentures in a container of fresh water overnight
- use a denture soaking tablet to disinfect dentures.

This is important because:

- brushing dentures protects against infections such as thrush
- using a denture brush gives better friction to clean the denture
- mild liquid soap is economical and effective
- toothpaste may scratch dentures increasing the risk of thrush
- brushing tongue and gums with a soft toothbrush removes dental plaque
- gums need time to rest from wearing dentures.

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Relief of dry mouth

Older people are more prone to a condition called dry mouth. This can be very uncomfortable.

Increasing age plus the side effect of many medications decrease saliva production. This is not helped by the tendency of older people not drinking enough.

Saliva is important as it protects the mouth.

We also need a good saliva flow to help us to taste, chew and swallow our food as well as talk.

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Relief of dry mouth

- Sip plain tap water
- Limit sugary foods & drinks, juice, tea, coffee and alcohol
- Avoid dry or salty or spicy foods
- Use a water based lip balm
- Ask about dry mouth products

You can encourage and support clients to:

- keep their mouth moist by sipping plain tap water
- limit sugary food or drinks, juice, tea, coffee and alcohol
- avoid foods that are dry or salty or spicy
- use a water-based lip moisturiser
- ask the dentist or pharmacist about dry mouth products.

This is important because:

- keeping the mouth and lips moist provides relief
- limiting foods that contribute to dry mouth helps relieve discomfort
- dry mouth products provide saliva support.

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Tooth friendly eating

What a person eats and drinks affects their oral health.

Changes start as soon as food and drinks enter the mouth. Bacteria in the dental plaque convert sugars and starches from the food into acids.

This acid attacks the tooth enamel and begins the tooth decay process.

Simple ways to reduce the effects of acid attack on teeth are to eat tooth friendly foods and make it a habit to swish and swallow plain tap water after eating.

Suggested activity:

- ask the audience to name some tooth friendly foods.

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Tooth friendly eating

- Enjoy 'tooth friendly' foods such as vegetables, fruits and plain dairy products (milk, yoghurt, cheese) with meals and as snacks
- Drink plain tap water after meals, snacks, other drinks and medications
- Limit snacking

You can encourage and support clients to:

- enjoy a variety of 'tooth friendly' foods such as vegetables, fruit and plain milk, yoghurt, cheese
- limit snacking and avoid continual sipping of sugary drinks and sucking of sugary lollies such as cough drops
- make it a habit to drink plain tap water to clean the mouth after meals, snacks, other drinks and medications.

This is important because:

- fresh vegetables and fruit help to stimulate saliva flow
- plain dairy products, especially cheese, help protect tooth enamel and also stimulate saliva
- saliva helps to clear food from the mouth and neutralises the acid produced by the bacteria in the dental plaque
- a significant factor contributing to tooth decay is the frequency of eating
- drinking plain tap water after eating helps clear any remaining food and rinse away acid from the mouth.

Note for older people who need to eat small frequent meals and snacks, reinforce the need to eat tooth friendly foods and drinking plain tap water after eating will help reduce the acid in the mouth.

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Seeing a dental professional

Poor patterns of dental care undermine the foundations of good oral health and compromise healthy ageing.

Surveys have found people over 75 years of age visit a dentist less frequently than other age groups.

Many older people only see a dental professional when they have a painful and urgent problem.

Reasons for this are physical and cognitive impairment as well as difficulties with transport, past negative experiences, anxiety and cost.

A routine oral health assessment and support with assisting clients to see a dental professional will help them maintain good oral health.

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See a dental professional

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 ?

A routine oral health assessment and support with assisting clients to see a dental professional will help them maintain good oral health.

The six question oral health assessment tool was developed to help non-dental health workers identify older people who are experiencing or who are at risk of poor oral health.

Research has shown that these simple six questions asked in reference to the teeth, mouth or dentures are predictive of an older person's need for dental treatment. A 'yes' to any of the six questions indicates a dental referral is required.

There is no requirement for an oral examination for clients who can easily self-report and the questions should take no longer than a few minutes.

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Quit smoking

Smoking is a preventable cause of illness and death.

Toxins in tobacco smoke enter airways and the bloodstream causing harm to almost every organ and system of the body.

Many of the medical conditions caused by smoking result in years of debilitating health issues including oral health problems.

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Quit smoking

- Talk to the doctor or pharmacist
- Call the QUITLINE on 13 7848
- Visit www.quitnow.info.au

You can encourage and support the client to:

- quit smoking
- talk to their doctor or pharmacist
- call the QUITLINE on 13 7848 or visit www.quitnow.info.au.

This is important because:

- smoking affects the whole body including the mouth
- quitting at any age has health benefits.

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Encouraging better oral health care

Use this slide to provide a summary of presentation thus far

So far we have talked about:

- why good oral health is important to quality of life and general health and wellbeing
- why it is important to work as a multidisciplinary team to improve the oral health of older people
- some simple ways in which home care workers can encourage and support older people to maintain oral health.

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Thinking framework

How do you approach your work?

- task and time
- think and link

Suggested activity:

Ask the audience to reflect on how they approach their work.

- Is it about what you have to do and how much time you have to do it in?
- Or is it more about thinking and linking what you do so it helps with the overall health care of the person you are looking after?

Note the following scenario about Max has been designed to tease this out.

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Meet Max:

- Max is 70 years old and uses a wheel chair
- he has diabetes
- he is a smoker
- he has been widowed for 2 years and lives alone in the family home
- he is on a level 1 package since the death of his wife
- he has one son and three grandchildren who live in another town.

Max's care plan:

- assistance with cleaning
- assistance with shopping & go for coffee at local café
- does his own personal care.

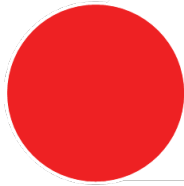
He has been your client for 2 years:

- you know him well
- Max enjoys chatting with you while you work
- he looks forward to your visits and his shopping and coffee outing.

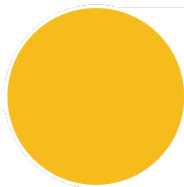
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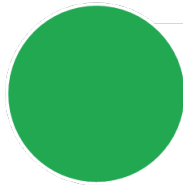
Thinking framework



STOP Is there a problem?



CHECK What is happening ?



ACT What should you do?

A simple **Stop, Check and Act** approach to thinking is an easy way to monitor and respond to changes in a client's oral health.

1. Stop

First of all, stop and think:

- Ask yourself if you have noticed anything about your client's oral health?
- Have there been any changes?

2. Check

Check your assumptions:

- Are the changes a problem?
- What could be causing them?

3. Act

Act by asking what you should do:

- Is this something I should report to the care coordinator?

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Lately things have started changing, you notice:

- Max is grumpy and irritable
- his clothes seem to be looser
- he has developed bad breath and you don't want to be so close to him / don't want to chat with him because of it.

You're in the bathroom cleaning and you notice things such as:

- blood in the basin
- frayed toothbrush
- toothpaste that is old and tube is empty
- or maybe a brand new toothbrush and toothpaste (hasn't been used)

You might also notice:

- meals unfinished on the table, in the fridge or in the bin
- Max has been asking for different food from what he normally buys
- when you are unpacking the groceries and there is uneaten food in the fridge and pantry cupboard
- the fridge looks a mess with plates/containers of half-eaten meals piling up
- Max doesn't want to go to the café for his coffee anymore.

Ask the audience what this might mean.

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Outcome for Max

The home care worker reported the oral health concerns to the care coordinator.

This triggered the care coordinator to do a follow up visit.

The care coordinator was able to find out how Max was coping with his oral health care and did an oral health assessment.

This triggered a dental referral and support was put in place to help Max get to the dentist:

- Max got a new partial denture
- he is enjoying eating his food again
- he no longer has bad breath
- he is back to his smiling and chatty self.

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Conclusion

- Good oral health and healthy ageing
- Good oral health begins at home
- Encouraging better oral health care

Good oral health is essential for healthy ageing and it begins at home.

As people age maintaining good standards of oral care becomes more difficult.

Poor oral health can easily be prevented by maintaining a Better Oral Health in Home Care routine.

Home care workers can help by encouraging and supporting clients to maintain a simple self-care routine which includes:

- care of natural teeth
- care of dentures
- relief of dry mouth
- tooth friendly eating
- seeing a dental professional
- quit smoking.

