



## SENIOR ORAL HEALTH FOR CAREGIVERS

If someone under your care needs help eating, they will probably also need help with their oral hygiene. Ask a dentist to show you how to properly brush your loved one's teeth or how to care for their dentures. Here are some ways that, as a caregiver, you can keep your loved one healthy and smiling bright.

### BRUSHING & FLOSSING

- Brush teeth twice a day for at least two minutes each time, using a soft-bristled brush and a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. If toothpaste is troublesome, you may brush with just water. The most important part of brushing is brushing.
- Floss once a day, using about 18 inches of floss. Wrap the floss around your middle fingers on both hands and use a "C" shape around the teeth, moving the floss back & forth to loosen any plaque between the teeth.
- Keep in mind that brushing & flossing can be done anywhere that is easiest for the older adult with just a towel, a bowl, and a cup of water.

### VISITING THE DENTIST

- If possible, select a dentist that already had experience working with older adults.
- Have the following items available at the dental appointment: complete medical history, list of current medications, and the name and phone number of all current doctors and providers.
- If the person you care for is in a wheelchair, confirm the dental office is accessible. For individuals who cannot be moved out of their wheelchair, see if you can get a reclining wheelchair with a headrest for the dental visit.

### FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

- Consider talking to a lawyer about gaining "medical power of attorney," which will allow you to make decisions about another person's healthcare, including their dental care.

**MORE INFORMATION ON ORAL HEALTH FOR OLDER ADULTS AT:**

**TOOTHWISDOM.ORG**

