



Community Health Connections

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Fact Sheet

Oral Hygiene

Did you know that 4 minutes a day can improve your life?

Most dentists recommend brushing your teeth twice a day for two minutes. Use an egg timer, play a favorite song, watch TV to get used to brushing for a full 2 minutes per day. Brushing alone does not remove all plaque build up. Flossing once a day before you brush your teeth can help to remove the plaque that just brushing may miss.

Oral Hygiene and Health Problems

A diagnosis of gum diseases (periodontitis) is associated with cardiovascular disease, stroke, and bacterial pneumonia.

People with Diabetes are more likely to develop periodontitis. Some studies have shown improving oral health can reduce the amount of sugar in the blood.

People that have dry mouth-lack of saliva-are at increased risk for tooth decay, mouth infections, and thrush. Cause of dry mouth can be age, disease, and medications.

Oral Hygiene and People with Developmental Disabilities

Many people we support have issues with oral hygiene. Lack of funds, anxiety, and decreased motor skills can be contributing factors. What can you do?

- Talk to the dentist about oral rinses that may decrease cavities
- Talk to the dental hygienist or occupational therapist about different modifications that can be made to make brushing the teeth easier. You may also want to ask about different positioning methods that would allow for better access to the mouth
- Talk to the person you are supporting. Let them know that dental hygiene is important and explain each step as you do it
- Encourage active participation. Let each person do as much of their own dental care as possible
- Promote good nutrition. Encourage the people you support to eat snacks that are not sticky and sugary