Oral Hygiene
Aims & Outcomes

Aims & Outcomes

The aim of this module is to facilitate student learning regarding how to assess oral hygiene and how to provide safe and effective oral care to patients.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the session the student should be able to:

- Identify the reasons for maintaining good oral health.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the basic anatomy and physiology of the mouth.
- Discuss the steps required to prepare the patient, environment and self prior to assisting a patient with oral hygiene needs.
- Describe the equipment required for carrying out oral hygiene.
- Demonstrate how to perform a comprehensive risk assessment of a patient's oral hygiene requirements.
- Discuss and describe how to perform oral hygiene given various scenarios.
- Evaluate own knowledge of the principles of oral care.
Oral hygiene can be defined as:

‘the efficient care of all areas of the mouth which include gums, tongue, lips and teeth/dentures.’

It is commonly assumed that oral hygiene is a simple task, however performing oral hygiene on another person is much more difficult than you would expect and is complicated more if the person is unable to assist you.

Risk assessing the oral hygiene needs of each patient is important to ensure that the most effective care and treatment plan is devised.
Effects of Poor Oral Hygiene

Poor oral hygiene can be detrimental to a person's general health status. A more serious risk of poor oral hygiene is the affect on other organs within the body, resulting in conditions such as pneumonia, infective endocarditis, malnutrition and rheumatoid arthritis.

Patients can experience

- Bacterial and chronic infections
- Chronic pain
- Reduced salivary flow – can lead to xerostomia which is dryness of the mouth
- Taste changes
- Dental plaque – a biofilm of microorganisms that attach to the teeth and cause dental caries and infections of the gingival tissue
- Dental caries – plaque induced problem caused by interaction of food with bacteria from dental plaque
- Gingivitis – red, swollen, bleeding areas of the gingiva on the margins surrounding each tooth
- Halitosis – offensive smelling breath usually caused by poor oral hygiene or infections
- Stomatitis – inflammation of the oral cavity with or without ulceration
- Tartar – hardened plaque adhered to the teeth
Oral Hygiene
Effects of Poor Oral Hygiene

Effects of Poor Oral Hygiene

Gingivitis

Tooth Decay

Oral Thrush

Tooth Decay
There are many risk factors that need to be taken into consideration when assessing a person's oral health and their requirements for oral hygiene.

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**Risk Factors to Poor Oral Health**

- Medications
- Unconscious or Intubated
- Medical Conditions
- Mental Health
- Poor Diet
- Age (Very Young / Very Old)
- Learning & Physical Disabilities
Preparing to Perform Oral Hygiene for a Patient

Preparation of AREA

- Ensure the surrounding area is tidy and free of any clutter
- Pull screens/curtains around the bed area
Preparing to Perform Oral Hygiene for a Patient

Preparation of **EQUIPMENT**

- Clean tray
- Plastic cups
- Mouthwash or clean solutions
- Appropriate equipment for cleaning
- Clean receiver or bowl
- Paper tissues/gauze
- Wooden tongue depressor
- Small-handled, soft bristle toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Denture pot
- Small torch
- Apron and gloves
- Mask (optional)
Preparing to Perform Oral Hygiene for a Patient

Preparation of PATIENT

- Explain the procedure and gain informed consent from the patient
- Check comfort of patient, such as their position
- If necessary protect and cover bed clothes and/or personal clothing from any spillages
- Ensure that warmth, comfort and dignity of the patient is maintained throughout
Oral Hygiene
Preparing to Perform Oral Hygiene for a Patient

Preparing to Perform Oral Hygiene for a Patient

Preparation of SELF

✓ Adhere to local uniform and work wear policy
✓ Perform hand hygiene in accordance with the hand hygiene policy
✓ Put on apron, gloves and any other PPE that may be required
Frequency of Oral Hygiene

It is important that patients have a thorough assessment of their oral hygiene status in order to plan effective care.

There are many assessment tools available. Check which one is being used in the area that you work.

- Four-hourly care will reduce the potential for infections from micro-organisms
- Two-hourly care will reduce potential of oral care problems and ensure patient comfort
- One-hourly care is advised for patients on oxygen therapy, patients that mouth breath, those with oral infections and any patients that remain unconscious (intubated and dying patients)
Oral Care Procedure Tips
Once the risk assessment has been completed and all steps of preparation are fulfilled, the procedure itself will need to be carried out.
The level of assistance required will vary. The following is advice on how to complete some tasks:

**INSPECTION OF MOUTH**

- **Use torch, spatula and gauze**
- **Document any changes in condition with respect to moisture, cleanliness, infection, bleeding, pain, ulcers**

**DENTURE REMOVAL**

- **If patient is unable to remove dentures...**
- **Use tissue or gauze, grasp the denture plate at the front with thumb and second finger, move denture up & down slightly until it loosens then place into a denture pot.**
- **Lift lower plate at an angle to aid removal without stretching the lips.**
- **Underlying tissues (gums) need to be cleaned. Using tissue or gauze gives improved grip and moving gently releases the suction force holding denture in place.**
Oral Care Procedure Tips

**PARTIAL DENTURE**
- Exert equal pressure on the border of each side of the denture
- Never hold the clasps as this could cause damage

**BRUSHING THE TEETH**
- Use soft bristled small toothbrush
- Ensure all teeth surfaces are cleaned
- Remember to brush the tongue too, be careful of this inducing the gag reflex

**REMEMBER TO RINSE**
- Provide patient with beaker of water or mouthwash to rinse their mouths
- Place a receptacle below chin for patient to void the rinse into
- If patient unable to do this, use a moistened brush to rinse their mouth
Oral Hygiene
Summary

Gain Consent
Prepare Area
Prepare Equipment
Prepare Self
Prepare Patient
Maintain Patient Comfort & Dignity
Clean Area and Reusable Equipment
Document Procedure in Patient Notes
Web Resources


