

TOPIC: ORAL CARE

1. Oral care includes cleaning the teeth, gums, tongue, inside of mouth and dentures and must be performed at least daily.

Oral care:

- a. Reduces the number of pathogens in the mouth.
- b. Helps prevent bad breath, gum disease, caries (cavities) and infections.
- c. Improves a client's sense of well being and appearance.
- d. Improves a client's sense of taste and helps improve appetite.
- e. Eliminates particles from beneath dentures, preventing gum injuries and improving the ability to chew.

2. When assisting with oral care, observe the condition of the teeth, gums, tongue and lips.

- a. Excessively bad breath - a sign of decay, infection or gastrointestinal problems.
- b. Bleeding - a sign of decay or infection.
- c. Bright red or pale gums – a sign of a disease process.
- d. Decayed, broken or loose teeth – can cause pain, infection and inability to eat.
- e. Swelling – a sign of irritation.
- f. Any sore - a sign of infection, injury, improperly fitted dentures.
- g. Coated tongue - a sign of a disease process.

3. Dentures are removable false teeth. Full dentures replace a client's entire upper and lower teeth. Partial dentures replace some of the client's teeth. When performing oral care for a client with dentures:

- a. Provide privacy. Dentures are a very personal and private item.
- b. Handle dentures carefully. Dentures are expensive to replace.

- c. When not in use, store dentures in cool water in a denture cup.
- d. Observe for signs that dentures do not fit properly.
- e. Encourage clients to wear their dentures to prevent gum shrinkage, improve speech, allow for proper chewing and improve self-image and appearance.

4. More frequent oral care is needed by clients who:

- a. Are unconscious.
- b. Have been vomiting.
- c. Have a high temperature.
- d. Are taking certain medications.
- e. Are dehydrated.
- f. Breathe through the mouth.
- g. Are being given oxygen.
- h. Are dying.
- i. Have a history of mouth, tooth and gum problems.

5. CNA's Role:

- a. Provide for privacy and encourage the client to do as much as possible to promote independence.
- b. Use Standard Precautions when performing or assisting with oral care.
- c. Report any unusual findings and complaints of pain or discomfort to the nurse immediately.
- d. Perform mouth care gently to prevent injuries.
- e. Rinse toothpaste from mouth thoroughly.