



# ACCESS FOR ALL SMILES

Your guide to supporting adults with disabilities and their oral health.

**DELTA DENTAL**  
FOUNDATION

Designed and Developed by McMillen Health

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# ACCESS FOR ALL SMILES

We recognize the effort you put into caregiving every day, and this program is designed with your busy life in mind. Each learning topic gives you the information you need to improve the oral health of the person or people you support. We also provide how-to videos to see our suggestions in practice.

Oral health is an important part of overall health. Teeth are connected to the mouth and body, and they impact many areas of health. For people with disabilities and who may be medically vulnerable, oral health is a vital part of a healthy life. Most people will feel better, eat better and sleep better with a healthy, pain-free mouth.

This program is self-guided. This means you can go at your own pace. You should review all content and videos to get the most out of this educational program. However, if you feel like you are getting too much information at once, take a break. You can pause, let the information sink in and then come back for more when you are ready.



# Motivational Interviewing

Inside Access for All Smiles, you will find motivational interviewing (MI) strategies to use during oral health conversations with the person you support.



## The MI strategies you will be using are:



### Open-ended questions

Questions that encourage a person to share thoughts or ideas instead of answering yes or no.



### Reflective listening

Repeating or rephrasing what a person says in a summary statement.



### Affirmations

Statements that recognize a person's experience and strengths.



### Summaries

A collection of reflective statements.



The purpose of MI is to identify goals and start making positive changes. **MI works best when you have a trusting, respectful relationship with the person you support.** When the person you support feels like you genuinely care, they will feel safe to talk about their thoughts and feelings.

**MI is a tool to help the person you support realize when their choices are keeping them from their goals.** Once they realize this, they will be more motivated to change. This is the best time to create an action plan.

You can also use MI to build a person's confidence in their abilities. It is human nature to have mixed feelings about change. **MI helps you be empathetic and understanding when the person you support has setbacks.** Together, you can refocus on their oral health goals.

## Using MI Strategies with People with Intellectual Disabilities

Here are tips for adapting MI strategies to make them appropriate for the person you support.

### Open-ended questions

- Ask only one question at a time.
- Start with query words except “why.”
- Stick to short, simple sentences.
- Use topic-focused questions.
- Allow extra time for the individual to respond yes or no.

### Reflective listening

- Use to structure their thoughts.
- Use to identify emotions.

### Affirmations

- Use specific, clear language.
- Don't exaggerate.

### Summaries

- Stick to short, simple sentences.
- Summarize at end of topic.
- Summarize when transitioning topics.
- Use summaries to confirm agreements.
- Ask the individual to summarize to confirm understanding.

### If the person you support is non-verbal, you may need to:

- Give extra time to make sure they understand your question.
- Pay close attention to their non-verbal cues.
- Follow up with yes/no questions so they can respond with simpler answers/signs.



In some cases, you will be talking with a person's family member or guardian about oral health goals. You will see the blue symbol above for MI strategies for conversations with family members/guardians.

If the person you support is resistant to the techniques or suggestions throughout this guide, remember that their answer may not always be the same. Try again later to see if they are willing to try new things.



### For more on motivational interviewing:

- <https://www.mhddcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Motivational-Interviewing-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
- [https://docksci.com/modification-of-motivational-interviewing-for-use-with-people-with-mild-intellect\\_5ce4eebfd64ab28c59728ea3.html](https://docksci.com/modification-of-motivational-interviewing-for-use-with-people-with-mild-intellect_5ce4eebfd64ab28c59728ea3.html)

# Behavior Supports



## Creating a Behavior Support Plan

Sensory sensitivities, mouth-related trauma, boredom or many other reasons could cause challenging behaviors during daily mouth care. Creating a plan can help identify the reasons and create strategies to improve daily mouth care.



### As a caregiver, you can use a behavior support plan to:

- Identify the reason for behaviors that are challenging or resistant to dental care.
- Help a person you support overcome fear about daily mouth care.
- Build cooperation to complete daily mouth care.
- Build self-help skills to complete daily mouth care.

A behavior support plan starts with a goal for the person you support. You can include the dental team, behavior support professionals and the person you support to choose an appropriate goal. Think about the skills and strengths of the person you support, along with any barriers to achieving the goal.

After you identify a goal, choose a behavior support strategy such as **adapting the environment**, **the ABC Model**, **desensitization**, **offering incentives** or **shaping**.

### Adapting the Environment

The setting where a task takes place. Changing the environment is often an easy strategy to make daily mouth care sessions a success.

### ABC Model

A way to improve behavior problems by understanding unwanted behavior and making changes before the behavior happens.

### Offering Incentives

Using incentives to motivate a person to repeat a desired behavior in the future. Avoid incentivizing with sugary foods and beverages.

### Shaping

Breaking a large task into small parts and offering an incentive to the person after they do a small task, which brings them closer to the desired step.







### Desensitization

Breaking a large task into small parts and letting a person get used to each small part.



## Create a Successful Environment

You can make a behavior support plan more successful by adapting the environment.

	Create consistent, predictable, agreeable routines around daily mouth care sessions.
	Find the right time of day. Mouth care sessions do not have to happen first thing in the morning or right before bed.
	Be responsive to the needs and interests of the person you support.
	Give choices. As an example: "Do you want to pause the show and brush your teeth now or wait until the show is over?"
	Stay present and engaged during mouth care sessions.
	Identify and reduce distractions or behavior triggers.



Daily mouth care sessions do not have to happen in the bathroom. Choosing a space with lots of light can make it easier to view the teeth and mouth. If the person you support cannot easily reach the sink or no sink is available, you can set out a cup or clean towel for them to spit into.



## The ABC Model

You can use the ABC model to find the cause of behaviors that are challenging or resistant to dental care. Once you know the cause, you can make changes to prevent the behavior.



- 1. Awareness** - What happened right before the behavior started?
  - Knowing what happened will help you predict the behavior later.
- 2. Behavior** - Describe what the behavior is.
  - Knowing the behavior will help you think about how to adjust in the future.
- 3. Consequence** - What happened after the behavior? Did something happen that would make the person repeat the behavior again?
  - If a person feels rewarded for disruptive behavior, they are more likely to do it again later.

## Desensitization

Desensitization is the process of breaking a large task down into small, incremental steps. Then, the steps are introduced one at a time. The next step is only introduced once the current step has been mastered. A person can move through the steps at whatever pace is best for them.

### Desensitization includes:

- Gently introducing each step.
- Having time to build skills at their own pace.
- Feeling more capable of learning the next step.
- Building trust between you and the person you support.

Caregivers start by breaking a single task into a series of small steps.

If the person you support is feeling overwhelmed or struggling to master a step, break the series of steps down into even smaller steps.

Even a step as small as holding a toothbrush can be broken down. An individual can get used to holding a toothbrush by gripping a similar object like a hairbrush or holding a toothbrush outside of daily mouth care sessions.



## Offering Incentives

Offering incentives encourages healthy behaviors using positive reinforcement for the benefit of the person you support. Offering incentives can reduce resistant behavior and increase cooperation. If you are offering incentives as part of daily mouth care sessions, it is important to choose incentives that are healthy. For example, sugar-free mints or gum are better than sugary treats that harm teeth. For more on incentives, watch the *Offering Incentives* video.

### Other appropriate incentives could be:

- Going on a walk.
- Favorite shows or videos.
- Favorite songs.
- Special objects.
- Favorite game or activity.
- Spending one-on-one time with you.



Genuine praise or a smile can be a powerful form of positive reinforcement. You should talk with the person you support to find out what incentives would motivate them.

## Shaping

Shaping is a combination of desensitization and offering incentives. First, a large task is broken down into small, incremental steps. Then an incentive is used to motivate the person you support to complete each step.

1. Decide what goal and steps are appropriate for the person you support.
2. Reward the person after they complete a small step.
3. Begin to increase the expectation so they will need to complete multiple steps before receiving a reward. The expectation keeps increasing as the person masters more steps.
4. Eventually, the reward will only be given when the person completes the entire task.
5. Once the entire task has been mastered, you will reduce how often the reward is given.
6. Continue to reduce the frequency of the reward until the person you support will complete the entire task without expecting a reward.

As with desensitization, it is important to make sure you have appropriate expectations for the person you support. If they feel defeated or frustrated instead of motivated, then you may need to break the task down into smaller steps or offer a different incentive.



### Examples of Shaping Goals

- Entering the bathroom for daily mouth care.
- Setting up a daily mouth care session.
- Holding a toothbrush.
- Completing steps of a daily mouth care session.
- Cleaning up supplies after a daily mouth care sessions.
- Entering the dental office.
- Tolerating a mouth exam.
- Brushing teeth.
- Flossing.

# Motivational Interviewing: Behavior Supports

## Better Conversations, Better Oral Health

Use these motivational interviewing (MI) strategies to talk about oral health with the person you support.



### MI Strategy for the Person You Support

Use open-ended questions to learn about the reasons for behaviors that are resistant to dental care.

#### Example:

- “How are you feeling about brushing your teeth?”
- “When it’s time to brush your teeth, what could I do differently?”
- “Tell me how [an adaptation] made this better.”

Open-ended questions may not be right for the person you support if they are non-verbal and respond with mostly yes or no answers.



### MI Strategy for Guardian or Family Member

Use reflective listening to keep the person engaged in conversation.

#### Example:

- “You realized that [person you support] gets distracted when they brush and floss.”



### Adapting MI Strategies

Remember to keep the questions topic-focused.

## Next Steps

These are additional resources that will help you and the person you support keep thinking about this topic after your conversation is over:

- [Task Breakdown Handout](#)
- [Adaptations, Positions & Behavior Support Handout](#)
- [Desensitization & Shaping Video](#)



# Daily Care: Basics

Caregivers play an important role in the daily oral hygiene of the people they support. As a caregiver, you may be completing all the steps of a mouth care session for a person, teaching the steps to someone or observing as someone completes daily mouth care independently.

A daily mouth care plan will help you keep track of their goals and how they are reaching them (see [Making a Daily Mouth Care Action Plan](#)). If you have concerns that are not addressed here, check with a professional, such as the dental team or an occupational therapist.



## Selecting a Toothbrush

The safest toothbrush option is a regular, soft-bristle toothbrush. Medium or hard bristles can damage teeth and gums and don't reach into spaces between the teeth. Toothbrushes come in different sizes to fit different mouth sizes. Depending on the needs of the person you support, you may need to modify their toothbrush (see [Adaptations and Positions](#)). For some individuals, an electric toothbrush or a double-sided toothbrush may be the best option.

Always replace toothbrushes or toothbrush heads every three months or when bristles are bent or frayed.



## Floss Alternatives

Dental professionals recommend floss, floss brushes or floss picks to clean between teeth for better oral health. The person you support may also prefer to use a water flosser.

## Daily Care Steps

1. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer.
2. If you are a professional caregiver, put on disposable gloves before touching dental hygiene items.
3. Gather supplies: toothbrush, fluoride toothpaste, flossing item(s) and water.
4. Remove partial or full dentures. Clean dentures following [denture care steps](#) (two times daily).
5. Check mouth for sores, bumps, swollen gums or thick, stringy saliva. Report these to your supervisor or dental professional.
6. Brush teeth following [toothbrushing steps](#) (two times daily).
7. For individuals with no teeth, clean their mouth with a wet toothbrush or tooth sponge (two times daily).
8. Clean between teeth (one time daily).
9. To use traditional floss or a floss pick, gently press floss between each tooth using a back-and-forth motion. Form a "C" shape around each tooth with the floss. Gently slide the floss up and down the sides of each tooth.



## Denture or Removable Dental Appliance Care Steps

Use these steps to care for full dentures, partial dentures, retainers, Invisalign or other similar appliances.

1. Clean dentures with a denture brush or soft toothbrush and denture powder or a non-abrasive cleaner such as baking soda or mild dish soap. Do not use toothpaste, which can scratch dentures.
2. Rinse dentures thoroughly.
3. Soak dentures overnight in a denture-cleaning solution. Check with the manufacturer and dentist about properly storing dentures.
4. Clean gums with a wet toothbrush or tooth sponge.

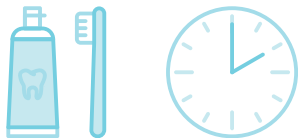
### Ask the Dental Team

At a dental visit, ask how you are doing with toothbrushing and flossing.



## Toothbrushing Steps

1. Wet toothbrush with warm water.
2. Place a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste on toothbrush.
3. Use **retraction** to get a better view of the teeth and gums.
4. Place the toothbrush bristles half on the teeth and half on the gums.
5. **Gently** brush in small circular motions, brushing all surfaces of all the teeth.
6. Brush gently and slowly for two minutes.
7. Thoroughly spit out toothpaste, but do not rinse mouth with water after brushing.



### Retraction

Gently pulling back the cheek or lips to get a better view of the teeth and gums. Retraction allows you to look for issues such as swelling or decay and to clean teeth without damaging mouth tissues.

1. Use a gloved finger or plastic spoon (never metal) to gently pull the cheek away just enough to see the teeth and gums.
2. Ask the person you support to open their mouth halfway.
3. Brush all surfaces of all sides of the teeth.
4. Remove the toothbrush and gently release the cheek.
5. Repeat these steps on the other side of the mouth.
6. For front teeth, gently grip and pull the lip away from the teeth and gums while you brush.

## Storing a Toothbrush

Toothbrushes and other personal oral care items should be stored in a container to limit the spread of bacteria. This container should close to protect the toothbrush but should also have air holes to let the toothbrush air-dry. If needed, the container can be labeled with the name of the owner.



## Nutrition

Nutrition plays an important role in oral health. Take time to talk with the person you support about how food and beverages affect the health of their mouth and teeth. Daily mouth care sessions remove **plaque** and interrupt the acid-production cycle (see [Decay & Nutrition](#) for more information).

Drinking enough water will help prevent dry mouth from dehydration.

To protect teeth from being damaged overnight, complete the final mouth care session after the person you support is done eating for the day. After this session, it is still safe for them to drink water.



### Plaque

A sticky substance that builds up on your teeth throughout the day. It has bacteria, saliva and residue from food and drink.

# Motivational Interviewing: Daily Care Basics

## Better Conversations, Better Oral Health

Use these motivational interviewing (MI) strategies to talk about oral health with the person you support.



### MI Strategy for the Person You Support

Use affirmations to encourage the person you support during daily mouth care.

#### Example:

“You marked off every day on your brushing chart this week. That’s awesome! Think you can do it again next week?”



### MI Strategy for Guardian or Family Member

Use open-ended questions to get helpful ideas from family members for the person you support.

#### Example:

“What have you tried in the past that worked for [person you support]?”



### Adapting MI Strategies

Remember to use specific language.

## Next Steps

These are additional resources that will help you and the person you support keep thinking about this topic after your conversation is over:

- [Social Stories Book: Steps to Cleaning Teeth Handout](#)
- [Product Suggestions](#)
- [Daily Care Basics Video](#)



# Decay & Nutrition

## Dental Decay

Dental decay is a **dental disease** that is contagious and chronic.

- **Contagious** - We “catch” the bacteria that causes decay. This usually happens when we are babies from using bottles, pacifiers, spoons and other items that our parents or siblings had in their mouth first.
- **Chronic** - The bacteria that causes dental disease can get worse and does not go away by itself.

### Dental Disease

A variety of conditions that can affect parts of the mouth, often caused by poor oral hygiene. This includes (but is not limited to) cavities, gum disease, oral cancer and abscess.



## Things That Hurt Your Mouth:

- **Acid** - This comes from acidic foods and drinks like soda pop. It is also produced when bacteria in your mouth feeds on sugar from food and drinks.
- **Plaque** - A sticky mix of bacteria, saliva (spit) and residue from foods and drinks. The bacteria and sugars in plaque produce acid, and the sticky plaque makes it stay on your teeth. Plaque is tooth-colored and difficult to see.
- **Dry mouth** - A lack of saliva caused by medications, medical conditions, or because a person does not take food by mouth (as with a G-tube).
- **Tobacco** - Using tobacco (including smokeless tobacco) and vaping is another cause of dental decay. It can lead to dry mouth, oral cancer, gum disease and cavities.

## Things That Help Your Mouth:

- **Daily mouth care sessions** - Will ideally include toothbrushing two times a day with fluoride toothpaste and flossing one time a day. Some people's needs will be different.
- **Fluoride** - A mineral that helps teeth stay strong and to resist dental decay. Fluoride can be found in many toothpastes or as a treatment by a member of the dental team.
- **Healthy nutrition** - Limiting sugar and simple starch helps to prevent dental decay (see next page for more information).



### Daily Mouth Care Session

Any oral health care that happens in one sitting on a daily basis.



## Nutrition's Role

While all foods and drinks (except for water) have at least some sugar, there are some types of food that have more sugar and are less healthy for teeth. It is also important to consider how often a person eats sugar. Constantly eating even small amounts of sugar does not allow your mouth time to wash away the sugar with saliva.

### Some common sugary foods and drinks to limit:

- Fruit juice and soda drinks.
  - Beware of diet sodas because the acid can still do damage.
  - Instead, stick to water and milk.
- Dried fruit and hard candies.
  - Whole and cut fruits are a healthier treat.
- Sugary baked goods.
  - As a rare treat, limit to mealtimes.
- Sticky foods (fruit snacks, taffy, gummy candies).
  - These foods stick to teeth, allowing the sugar to do a lot of damage.
  - Instead of gummy vitamins, use a tablet or capsule-style vitamin.
- Alcoholic drinks.
  - If alcohol is served, limit to mealtimes.



**Nutrition**  
Food and drinks that give your body the nutrients it needs to survive.



## Special Considerations

Some sources of sugar cannot be avoided. For example, thickening agents for people with trouble swallowing have starch (a form of sugar) and citric acid. However, regular mouth care sessions will help to prevent dental decay.

Some caregivers have been taught to use thickening agents during toothbrushing instead of water. However, **using the thickener during toothbrushing can harm teeth**. Instead of using a thickener, use a very small amount of toothpaste or none at all.



However, if you do not use toothpaste during brushing, the teeth will not have the benefit of fluoride. It is important that you apply fluoride in other ways to strengthen the teeth. One of these options may work for the person you support:

- Apply a small smear of toothpaste with a cotton swab.
- Have a dentist use a fluoride rinse.
- Have a dentist apply a fluoride varnish.
- Talk to the dental team of the person you support for other recommendations.



# Motivational Interviewing: Decay & Nutrition

## Better Conversations, Better Oral Health

Use these motivational interviewing (MI) strategies to talk about oral health with the person you support.



### MI Strategy for the Person You Support

Use an affirmation to encourage nutritious food choices.

#### Example:

“That was a good idea to add fruit to the grocery list.”



### MI Strategy for Guardian or Family Member

Use an affirmation to encourage a family member’s participation in oral health goals.

#### Example:

“Thanks for the suggestion to add vegetables as a pizza topping. We appreciate any input you have!”



### Adapting MI Strategies

Remember you don’t need to exaggerate.

## Next Steps

These are additional resources that will help you and the person you support keep thinking about this topic after your conversation is over:

- [Weekly Menu Plan Handout](#)
- [Decay & Nutrition Video](#)



# Chronic Health Conditions

Oral health conditions are associated with other chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, abscesses and heart infections.



## Diabetes

For a person with diabetes, good oral health becomes even more important. Diabetes is associated with **dry mouth** and an increased risk for infections. Without saliva to rinse the mouth, bacteria can grow. Diabetes can also make it difficult for the body to heal infections in the mouth. Untreated or uncontrolled diabetes can increase a person's risk for developing gum disease, and untreated gum disease has an effect on a person's diabetes.

## Gum Disease

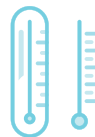
Gum disease is an infection that causes red, swollen and bleeding gums. Gingivitis is early-stage gum disease, while periodontitis is advanced gum disease. When left untreated, gum disease can eventually lead to tooth loss. The most common cause of gum disease is the build-up of bacteria. Brushing with a fluoride toothpaste and flossing removes **plaque** to reduce bacteria in the mouth.

## Abscesses

Poor dental care can lead to bleeding gums, gum pain, tooth sensitivity, tooth pain and possibly tooth loss. Left untreated, these conditions can lead to a rare but serious condition called an abscess. An abscess is a pocket of pus that forms in the gums of an infected tooth. An abscess needs to be treated by a dentist. Proper toothbrushing and cleaning between teeth will reduce the risk for abscesses.

## Symptoms of a Dental Abscess

- Tooth feeling loose.
- Pain in surrounding teeth, gum, jaw or cheek.
- Swelling in gums or face.
- A bubble or "pimple" on the gums.
- Swollen lymph glands in neck.
- Loss of appetite.
- Difficulty chewing or speaking.
- Redness.
- Bleeding.
- Fever.



### Dry Mouth

Condition when your mouth feels dry, even when drinking plenty of water.

### Plaque

A sticky substance that builds up on your teeth. It is made of bacteria, saliva and food residue.



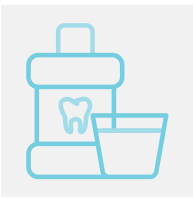
## Medications

As a caregiver, you should be familiar with common oral health medications. These medications may be part of a person's daily mouth care session. You should always consult with the dental team before starting new oral health medication.



## Fluoride

Fluoride is a natural element that strengthens teeth and prevents decay caused by bacteria. Usually, the fluoride in toothpaste and in the water supply is enough to protect teeth. If a stronger fluoride treatment is needed, a dentist may prescribe a rinse, a gel, a toothpaste with a higher fluoride concentration or a fluoride varnish.



## Antimicrobial Products

Mouthwashes kill the bacteria that lead to tooth decay and gum disease. You can purchase mouthwashes over the counter. If necessary, dentists can also prescribe stronger antibiotic mouthwashes (see the [Product Suggestions](#) page for more).



## Products for Dry Mouth

Dry mouth is a symptom of some medications and medical conditions. Dry mouth can be treated with mouthwashes, sprays or gels. These can be purchased at the store or through a prescription from the dentist (see the [Product Suggestions](#) page for more).

## Tooth Repair Products

For early-stage tooth decay, a dentist may prescribe a mineral fluoride product that prevents tooth decay from progressing.

# Motivational Interviewing: Chronic Health Conditions

## Better Conversations, Better Oral Health

Use these motivational interviewing (MI) strategies to talk about oral health with the person you support.



### MI Strategy for the Person You Support

Use open-ended questions to assess the person's knowledge of a topic.

#### Example:

"Help me understand what the dentist said about your sore tooth."

"Now that you talked to the dentist, what do you want to do differently?"



### MI Strategy for Guardian or Family Member

Use open-ended questions to assess a family member's knowledge of a topic.

#### Example:

"How comfortable do you feel about your knowledge of [person you support]'s diagnosis?"



### Adapting MI Strategies

Remember to allow extra time for a response.

## Next Steps

These are additional resources that will help you and the person you support keep thinking about this topic after your conversation is over:

- [Monthly Brushing & Flossing Tracker Handout](#)
- [Chronic Conditions Video](#)



# Injuries & Safety

## See Something, Say Something

While caring for an adult with a disability, you need to be aware of oral health issues such as:

- Mouth sores or lumps.
- Difficulty chewing.
- Red, swollen or bleeding gums.
- Dark areas or holes in teeth.
- Build-up of plaque on teeth.
- Sores or cracks on gums or in corners of the mouth.
- Red or white spots.
- Loose teeth.
- Broken teeth.
- Mouth odor.
- Dry mouth.



Professional caregivers should report these conditions to a supervisor. Family member caregivers should contact the dental team for help treating oral health issues.

## First Aid for Oral Health Emergencies

If the person you support has an oral health emergency, you should provide first aid and report the incident to a supervisor or medical professional.



<b>Broken tooth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gently clean dirt, debris or food from the injured area with warm water.</li> <li>• Place a cold compress on the face over the injured area.</li> <li>• Locate and save any broken tooth fragments if possible.</li> <li>• Contact a supervisor or health professional.</li> </ul>
<b>Cut or bitten tongue, lip or cheek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean area with a clean, wet cloth.</li> <li>• Apply pressure with cloth to stop the bleeding.</li> <li>• Apply ice to the swollen or bruised areas. If bleeding non-stop after 15 minutes, or with pressure, contact a supervisor or health professional.</li> </ul>
<b>Knocked out permanent tooth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find the tooth. Handle by the crown (top) of the tooth, not the root.</li> <li>• Rinse dirt and debris off the tooth with water; do not scrub tooth.</li> <li>• Put the tooth into a cup of fresh milk. Do not put the tooth into tap water.</li> <li>• Contact a supervisor or health professional.</li> </ul>
<b>Toothache or abscess</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rinse the mouth well with warm salt water to remove any food debris.</li> <li>• If the face is swollen, place a cold compress on the outside of the cheek.</li> <li>• Contact a supervisor or health professional.</li> </ul>
<b>Possible broken jaw</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediately call 911.</li> </ul>

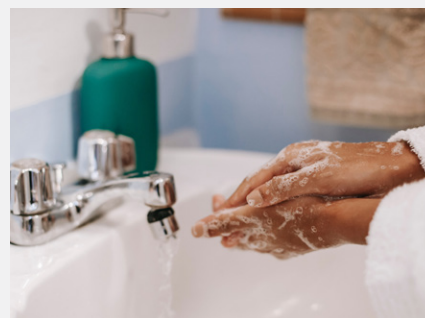
## Dental Safety at Home

### Controlling the Spread of Bacteria

Saliva and blood in the mouth contain bacteria that can spread infection from one person to another. Protect yourself and others with the below tips and by storing personal oral care items in individual, labeled containers.



### Tips for Staying Safe During Daily Mouth Care Sessions



1. You and the person you support should each wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
2. If you are a professional caregiver, put on disposable gloves before touching personal oral care items. You may want to wear protective eyewear and a face mask for additional protection.
3. After completing the mouth care session, place all dental hygiene items back before removing gloves. Learn more about safely storing toothbrushes in Daily Care Basics.
4. Remove used gloves by pinching them at the wrist and turning them inside out. Be careful not to touch the outside surface of the glove.
5. Both you and the person you are helping should wash hands or use hand sanitizer again at the end of the care session.



### Medications

Always review the labels on oral health medications before using them. Write any information about dispensing oral health medications in a person's daily mouth care plan.

If the person you support is not able to spit, use mouth sprays or gels instead of mouthwashes. You can also apply liquid medication directly to teeth using a cotton swab or toothbrush.

If you have questions about the oral health medications for the person you support, talk to your supervisor or the dental team.



# Motivational Interviewing: Injuries & Safety

## Better Conversations, Better Oral Health

Use these motivational interviewing (MI) strategies to talk about oral health with the person you support.



### MI Strategy for the Person You Support

Use open-ended questions to learn more about a person's oral health history.

#### Example:

"Tell me about how you chipped your tooth."



### MI Strategy for Guardian or Family Member

Use open-ended questions to learn more about the person you support from a family member.

#### Example:

"Tell me about the time that [person you support] had a dental emergency. What do you wish you knew back then?"



### Adapting MI Strategies

Remember to use only one question at a time.

## Next Steps

These are additional resources that will help you and the person you support keep thinking about this topic after your conversation is over:

- [First Aid for Oral Health Emergencies Handout](#)
- [Injury & Safety Video](#)





# Dental Visits Part 1: Planning

The first step in scheduling a dental visit is finding a dental office that serves individuals with disabilities. Dental teams and dental clinics vary in how they can serve patients with disabilities and patients with Medicaid.



## Get-To-Know-You Visits (Desensitization Visits)

Get-to-know-you visits give the person you support a chance to prepare for their upcoming dental care. Knowing the schedule, dental procedures and potential challenges ahead of time can make a more successful appointment. Some individuals may need multiple get-to-know-you visits to prepare for a dental appointment.

### Get-to-know-you visits can include:

- Meeting the dental team and office staff.
- Touring the building and exam room.
- Learning about dental procedures and equipment.
- Discussing accommodations and behavior support options.



**Before scheduling a get-to-know-you visit, you should ask if there is a fee and if you can visit at non-busy times, like early morning or lunchtime.**

If a get-to-know-you visit is not possible, another option is looking at photos of the office and staff members on the dental office's website. Some dental offices may even have video tours online.

## Accommodations

Dental offices that serve individuals with disabilities may provide accommodations. The dental team can help determine which accommodation(s) is best for the person you support. **Before the appointment, request that all accommodations be documented in the patient chart.** Ask if the staff can review the chart before the patient arrives to prevent disruptions to the treatment plan. If the person you support needs oral health education, request this ahead of time to prepare the oral team.



### Wheelchair Accessibility

Accessible parking spaces, sidewalks, ramps and entrances.

Accessible waiting rooms and restrooms with wide pathways and doorways.

Accessible exam rooms with adjustable dental chairs, ability to transfer patients into dental chairs or ability to treat patients in their wheelchairs

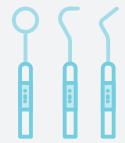
## Examples of accommodations include:

- Low-stimulation exam rooms.
  - Calming music.
  - Dimmed lighting.
  - Private exam space.
- Weighted blankets.
- Tinted glasses.
- Headphones.
- Televisions in exam rooms.
- Get-to-know-you (desensitization) visits.
- Protective stabilization.
- Early or specially scheduled appointments to:
  - Avoid long wait times.
  - Avoid crowded waiting rooms.



## Dental Specialties

If the person you support needs further care, they may be referred to a dental specialist.



<b>Periodontists</b>	Diagnose, prevent and treat gum diseases.
<b>Prosthodontists</b>	Treat dental and facial problems related to missing teeth.
<b>Pediatric Dentists</b>	Provide primary and comprehensive dental care for infants and children.
<b>Oral Surgeons</b>	Provide surgical treatment for dental diseases and injuries.
<b>Endodontists</b>	Diagnose, treat and prevent infections and injuries to the pulp and nerves of teeth.
<b>Orthodontists</b>	Diagnose, prevent and correct poor bites.

For residents of Indiana, Michigan, or Ohio visit [www.SmileHelpNow.com](http://www.SmileHelpNow.com) to find a dentist that accepts Medicaid or provides services at low-cost.

# Dental Visits Part 2: Behavior Guidance, Protective Stabilization & Sedation

As a caregiver, you will want to know all the options a dental office can offer the person you support. You and the dental team are responsible for creating a plan that balances quality dental treatment and the well-being of the person you support.

## Before recommending supports, dentists will consider the following:

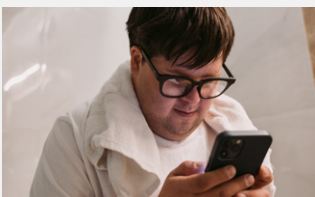
- Behavior guidance that has been successful at home or during previous dental visits.
- Oral health needs of the patient.
- Emotional and cognitive level of the patient.
- Medical and physical condition of the patient.
- Preferences of the patient.
- Preferences of the legal guardian.
- The safety and well-being of the patient during the procedure.



## Behavior Guidance

The least invasive support the dental team can give a patient is behavior guidance such as distraction or desensitization.

- **Distraction:** When a patient can have a tablet, phone, headphones, a fidget toy or a special item as a distraction, their attention is not on the dental treatment.
- **Desensitization:** Carefully getting a patient used to dental treatment can have long-term benefits in helping patients tolerate dental visits and dental care in the future.



## Protective Stabilization

Protective stabilization is used to limit a patient's ability to move during a procedure. It may be a better option for some because of the health risks and costs that come with sedation. Each patient will respond to protective stabilization differently. Some patients can tolerate or even find comfort in protective stabilization. For other patients, protective stabilization can cause distress.

The dental team should talk to a patient and the caregiver about protective stabilization before using it. Legal guardians will need to give signed consent before the appointment. If you have questions, you can ask at the [get-to-know-you visit](#).



## Sedation

Dentists can offer a range of sedation options to patients, from local anesthesia to general anesthesia, and some may require going to a hospital operating room. The deeper the level of sedation, the greater the potential health risks for the patient.

Dentists will evaluate a patient's health and medical history to determine the safest level of sedation for each dental treatment. If a patient has significant health concerns, the dentist also needs to consult the primary care doctor before using sedation.

Sedation can seem more convenient in some situations. However, **sedation has health risks, such as respiratory distress or heart rate and blood pressure changes.** This is also an expensive option and is not always covered by insurance.



### More You Should Know

Before using sedation or protective stabilization with a patient, a dentist will inform the caregiver and patient of each option's benefits and risks. **If a patient is going to be sedated, a legal guardian needs to provide signed consent before the dental appointment.**

Caregivers for adults with disabilities are advocates for the person they support. **If you feel that the dental team is recommending an option that is too invasive, you can request more information.** You can also explain to the dental team what option you think is best for the person you support.

### Here are some things you can say or ask in that situation:

- “At home, \_\_\_\_\_ works well when I need to check his mouth. Can we try that?”
- “At the last dental visit, we did \_\_\_\_\_. This is why it did/didn't work.”
- “Can you tell me more about why you recommend this option? What are the benefits and risks?”
- “Before we use sedation, can we talk about the possibility of protective stabilization?”



# Motivational Interviewing: Dental Visits

## Better Conversations, Better Oral Health

Use these motivational interviewing (MI) strategies to talk about oral health with the person you support.



### MI Strategy for the Person You Support

Use summarizing to learn about changes the person you support wants to make.

#### Example:

“Here’s what I’m hearing. You didn’t like how bright it was in the room. And the dentist’s sunglasses hurt your ears. Now we need a better plan for next time. Did I miss anything?”



### MI Strategy for Guardian or Family Member

Use affirmations to acknowledge the person’s emotions.

#### Example:

“Sounds like you’ve had some tough experiences taking [person you support] to the dentist. No wonder you’re worried about this appointment.”



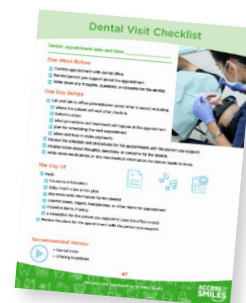
### Adapting MI Strategies

Remember to use summaries when you transition from talking to action planning.

## Next Steps

These are additional resources that will help you and the person you support keep thinking about this topic after your conversation is over:

- [Dental Visit Checklist Handout](#)
- [Dental Visits Video](#)



# Adaptations & Positions

Caregivers of adults with disabilities should be familiar with ways to adapt daily mouth care sessions. If possible, talk with an occupational therapist about the right modifications for the person you support.

If you have other concerns that are not directly addressed here, check with a professional such as the dental team or an occupational therapist.

## Adaptations can include:

- [Adapting toothbrushes.](#)
- [Adapting positions.](#)
- [Adapting environments.](#)
- [Choosing the right oral health products.](#)



## Adapting Toothbrushes

Toothbrushes can be modified to make them easier to hold and manipulate.

- Secure toothbrush to hand using:
  - Rubber bands.
  - Hair tie.
  - Elastic bands.
- Enlarge toothbrush handle using:
  - Sponges.
  - Rubber ball such as a tennis ball.
  - Bicycle handle grip.
- Lengthen toothbrush handle using:
  - Ruler.
  - Wooden tongue depressor.
- Create an angled toothbrush handle:
  - Heat toothbrush handle in hot water and gently bend.
- Use a smaller toothbrush.



## Adapting Positions

When cleaning someone else's teeth, you want to choose a position where you can see and access the teeth. You also want to be sure their head is supported. If you are a professional caregiver, always follow company policies or talk to a supervisor about your options.

Before starting, gather all daily mouth care supplies. If you are not near a sink, set out a cup for the person you support to spit into. For more, see [Daily Care: Basics](#).

### Mouth Rest

A specially designed tool made from rubber, silicone or hard foam that is placed between teeth to hold the mouth open during mouth care sessions.



### Seated

The person you support can sit in a chair or remain in their wheelchair if they use one. Make sure wheelchair wheels are locked. Stand next to and slightly in front of the person.



### Using a Mouth Rest

To use a mouth rest, place it on one side of the mouth while you brush and floss the other side of the mouth, then switch sides. Remove the mouth rest at least once every 60 seconds to allow the person you support to rest their jaw and to swallow (see [Product Suggestions](#)).



### Reclined

**Option 1:** Sit on the couch while the person you support sits on the floor in front of you. They will lean their head back against your knees.

**Option 2:** Sit on the floor with a pillow in your lap. The person you support can recline on a cushion or beanbag, resting their head on your lap.

**Option 3:** Kneel on the floor with a pillow on your knees. The person you support lies on the floor, reclining against the pillow with their head in your lap.



### Lying Down

Sit on the couch or bed. The person you support lies down with their head on a pillow in your lap.

# Motivational Interviewing: Adaptations & Positions

## Better Conversations, Better Oral Health

Use these motivational interviewing (MI) strategies to talk about oral health with the person you support.



### MI Strategy for the Person You Support

Use reflective listening to help the person you support to identify their emotions and organize their thoughts.

#### Example:

**Person you support:** “I can’t brush my teeth right now!”

**You:** “The evening has been busy. You seem stressed. Do you want to relax now and brush your teeth later?”

Use open-ended questions to learn how the person you support felt about an adaptation or position.

#### Example:

“You sat on the floor while I brushed your teeth. How could we make that better?”

## Next Steps

These are additional resources that will help you and the person you support keep thinking about this topic after your conversation is over:

- [Adaptations, Positions & Behavior Support Handout](#)
- [Product Suggestions](#)
- [Adaptations & Positions](#)
- [Scenario: Lying Down](#)
- [Scenario: Seated](#)
- [Scenario: Reclined](#)



### MI Strategy for Guardian or Family Member

Use reflective listening to paraphrase what a family member shares.

#### Example:

**Family member:** “[Person you support] has been brushing her own teeth since she was a kid. I’m not sure why suddenly you think someone needs to help her.”

**You:** “You’re wondering why we are suggesting [person you support] needs help brushing since she’s always done it independently. Let’s talk more about why [person you support]’s needs have changed.”



### Adapting MI Strategies

Remember to allow extra time for a response.





# Product Suggestions



Access for All Smiles is not sponsored by the brands on this list. These products are suggestions for daily mouth care that may help adults with disabilities. You should always talk with the dental team about which products are right for the person you support.

## Fluoride Toothpaste

Fluoride toothpaste will almost always be the healthiest choice. Talk with the dental team about choosing the right toothpaste product for the person you support.

	\$	\$\$	\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$\$
<b>Easy-hold Toothbrushes</b>	<a href="#">GUM Travel Toothbrush with Wide, Folding Handle</a>	<a href="#">RADIUS Flex Brush 3 Pack - Curved Handle, Left-handed and Right-handed options</a>			
<b>Electronic Toothbrushes</b>	<a href="#">Oral-B Pulsar, Battery-Powered Vibrating Disposable Toothbrush, 2 Pack</a>	<a href="#">Triple Bristle GO Battery Sonic Travel Toothbrush</a>	<a href="#">Oral-B Pro 1000 CrossAction Electric Toothbrush</a>	<a href="#">hum by Colgate Rechargeable Electric Toothbrush for Adults</a>	<a href="#">Philips Sonicare ProtectiveClean Rechargeable Electric Power Toothbrush</a>
<b>Alternative Toothbrushes</b>	<a href="#">EasyHonor Extra Soft Toothbrush 6 Pack</a>	<a href="#">3-Sided Sensory Toothbrush, 4 Pack</a>	<a href="#">Colgate Magik Gamified Toothbrush</a>	<a href="#">Collis Curve Soft Three-Sided Toothbrush, 4 Pack</a>	<a href="#">AutoBrush Pro Whole Mouth Toothbrush</a>
<b>Floss Tools</b>	<a href="#">GUM Soft-Picks Original Dental Picks, 150 Count</a>	<a href="#">Flossaid Dental Floss Holder - 3 pack</a>	<a href="#">T.Smile Evolutionary Mid-Length Handle Flossers</a>	<a href="#">Oral-B Water Flosser Advanced</a>	<a href="#">Waterpik Aquarius Professional Water Flosser</a>
<b>Adaptive Materials</b>	<a href="#">Foam Grip Tubing Aid for Utensils, 6 Pack</a>	<a href="#">EazyHold Silicone Hand Grip Aid, 2 Pack</a>	<a href="#">Maddak Universal Built-Up Handle, 4 Pack</a>		
<b>Dry Mouth Solutions</b>	<a href="#">Biotene Dry Mouth Moisturizing Spray</a>	<a href="#">OraCoat XyliMelts Dry Mouth Relief Oral Adhering Discs</a>	<a href="#">ACT Dry Mouth Lozenges with Xylitol</a>	<a href="#">ACT Dry Mouth Rinse - 4 pk.</a>	<a href="#">Biotene Dry Mouth Oral Rinse - 3 pk.</a>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<a href="#">Finger Toothbrushes for Training Brushing, 3 Piece</a>	<a href="#">Dental Bite Blocks, 9 Piece Set</a>	<a href="#">MUNKCARE Oral Care Swabs Disposable, 100 Count</a>	<a href="#">Open Wide Mouth Rest</a>	<a href="#">Armor Dental Retractor</a>

# Motivational Interviewing: Product Suggestions

## Better Conversations, Better Oral Health

Use these motivational interviewing (MI) strategies to talk about oral health with the person you support.



### MI Strategy for the Person You Support

Use an open-ended question to learn how specific products are working.

#### Example:

“Tell me about how [product] has been working for you.”



#### Adapting MI Strategies

Remember to use topic-focused questions.



### MI Strategy for Guardian or Family Member

Use an open-ended question to learn from a family member about how an oral health product is working for the person you support.

#### Example:

“What have you noticed when [person you support] is brushing at your house?”



## Next Steps

These are additional resources that will help you and the person you support keep thinking about this topic after your conversation is over:

- [Product Suggestions](#)
- [Adaptations, Positions & Behavior Support Handout](#)



# Making a Daily Mouth Care Action Plan

A [Daily Mouth Care Action Plan](#) is a living document that you can use to direct daily mouth care activities. **It should be reviewed frequently and updated anytime there are changes in mouth care routines or after a dentist visit.** Some people will need their plan updated more often as they learn new skills or respond to [behavior support](#).



You and the person you support can use the action plan to share about daily mouth care activities and to track progress on oral health goals. You and the rest of the caregiving team can provide more consistent, predictable care for the people you support when you communicate about goals and progress.

An adult with a disability may be able to complete all steps independently. They may also need support caring for their mouth. The [Daily Mouth Care Action Plan](#) includes a section about an individual's level of participation in daily mouth care.



## Create and Track Oral Health Goals

The [Daily Mouth Care Action Plan](#) includes space to create and track goals related to nutrition, daily mouth care and dental visits.



## Nutrition Goals

The nutrition section includes space to create action steps to move the person you support from where they are now to where they want to be. This section should be updated as steps change or are achieved.

### Example:

**Where we want to be:** T. eating a serving of fruits or vegetables at each meal.

**Where we are:** T. eats approximately 1 serving of fruit or vegetable a day.

**Before:** T. helps plan meals and chooses the fruit or vegetable.

**During:** T. serves self the fruit or vegetable.

**After:** At end of each week, talk about what fruits or vegetables T. did or did not like.

## Daily Mouth Care Goals

The daily mouth care section is designed to help caregivers plan for daily mouth care sessions. This section should be updated as steps change or are achieved.

### Example:

**Where we want to be:** Find toothbrush adaptation that allows M. to brush independently.

**Where we are:** Looking for a toothbrush adaptation that works for M.

**Before:** Choose an adaptation for M. to practice (add grip to a toothbrush, use hair tie, etc.).

**During:** Observe M. while brushing, give reminders as needed.

**After:** Discuss adaptation with M., decide to continue practicing w/ adaptation or try different adaptation.

See [Appendix A12](#) for more ideas.

## Dental Visit Goals

The dental visit section should be completed with the dental team and can be updated at each dental appointment. The purpose of this section is to make dental appointments as successful as possible.

### Example:

**Where we want to be:** G. tolerates dentist touching his mouth during exam.

**Where we are:** G. sometimes lets dentist touch mouth for a few seconds.

**Before:** During daily mouth care, gently inspect G.'s mouth with gloved fingers.

**During:** Leading up to appointment, remind G. that dentist needs to examine his mouth.

**After:** Dental team discusses how well G. tolerated exam, adjust plans as needed.



For each section, there is space for the caregiver to write a plan for before, during and after the activity.

- **Before:** What do you do to prepare for the activity (e.g., distractions, time of day).
- **During:** What are the skills or tasks you are currently working to achieve?
- **After:** What are the incentives you are using?

In the “Other Information” section of the [Daily Mouth Care Action Plan](#), you should list any behavior supports such as incentives, desensitization or shaping. If needed, make a note where other caregivers can find the entire behavior support plan.

## Oral Health Consent Forms

Oral health care procedures, including any changes to the [Daily Mouth Care Action Plan](#), may require written permission from a person’s legal guardian.



## The “Other Information” section of the action plan can include:

- The best time of day for mouth care.
- Where mouth care sessions take place.
- Guidance techniques such as hand-over-hand, a gentle touch or verbal cues.
- Additional behavior support information.

# Daily Mouth Care Action Plan

**Instructions:** Use a new action plan when goals change or are achieved.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dentist: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date created: \_\_\_\_\_ Next Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

Level of Participation: \_\_\_\_\_

## Nutrition Goal

Date Goal Achieved: \_\_\_\_\_

Where we want to be: \_\_\_\_\_

Where we are: \_\_\_\_\_

Before: \_\_\_\_\_

During: \_\_\_\_\_

After: \_\_\_\_\_

## Daily Mouth Care Goal

Date Goal Achieved: \_\_\_\_\_

Where we want to be: \_\_\_\_\_

Where we are: \_\_\_\_\_

Before: \_\_\_\_\_

During: \_\_\_\_\_

After: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dental Visit Goal** (complete with a member of the dental team) Date Goal Achieved: \_\_\_\_\_

Where we want to be: \_\_\_\_\_

Where we are: \_\_\_\_\_

Before: \_\_\_\_\_

During: \_\_\_\_\_

After: \_\_\_\_\_

Products and Medications: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Information: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Daily Mouth Care Action Plan

**Instructions:** Use a new action plan when goals change or are achieved.

Name: Kylie L. Dentist: Dr. James at Family Dental

Phone: (123) 456-7890

Date created: 1/2/22 Next Appointment: Wednesday, July 6 at 2 pm

Level of Participation: Independently brushes, verbal guidance with flossing

## Nutrition Goal

Date Goal Achieved: \_\_\_\_\_

Where we want to be: Sugary beverages are a once-in-awhile treat

Where we are: K. drinks one soda a day

Before: Weekly meal plan with K., encourage K. to fill in water as a drink for most meals

During: Serve K. water at every meal, even if K. chooses soda too

Offer praise if K. chooses water over soda or finishes water at meal

After: Incentive: Saturday movie night if K. drinks less than 3 sodas in a week

## Daily Mouth Care Goal

Date Goal Achieved: \_\_\_\_\_

Where we want to be: K. flossing all teeth without reminders

Where we are: K. needs reminders to stay on task while flossing

Before: Offer praise if K. starts flossing after brushing, remind if needed

During: Offer praise if K. flosses entire bottom row of teeth without redirection

Offer praise if K. flosses entire top row of teeth without redirection

After: Incentive: short walk around the block if K. stays on task flossing both rows

**Dental Visit Goal** (complete with a member of the dental team) Date Goal Achieved: \_\_\_\_\_

Where we want to be: K. to be comfortable, cleaning done efficiently and quicker

Where we are: K. fidgets, turns head. Appt. take longer causing K. more discomfort.

Before: Pack headphones and fidget item of K.'s choice for the appointment

During: 1. K. wears headphones and listens to music from phone

2. If K. start moving too much during cleaning/exam, offer fidget toy

After: Review with dental staff & decide if plan worked/what adjustments needed

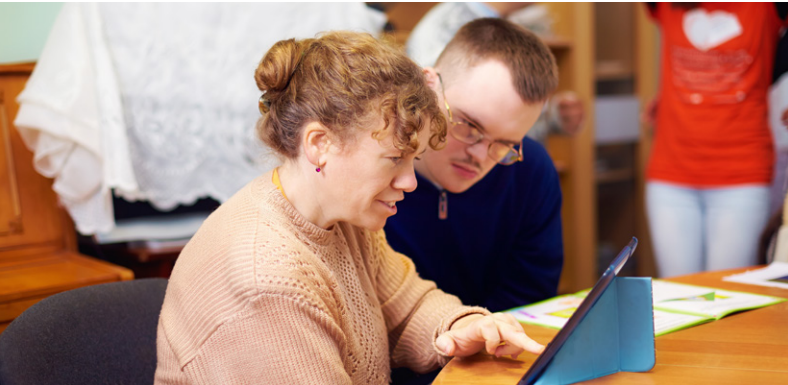
**Products and Medications:** Biotene Dry Mouth Oral Rinse after brushing and flossing

**Other Information:** K. may need a verbal reminder to stay on task during mouth care

# Motivational Interviewing: Action Plan

## Better Conversations, Better Oral Health

Use these motivational interviewing (MI) strategies to talk about oral health with the person you support.



### MI Strategy for the Person You Support

Use summarizing to help create plans for daily mouth care.

#### Example:

“Let me make sure I understand you. You want to change when you brush your teeth. You would rather brush right after dinner, not right before bed. You don’t like when we interrupt your show. That frustrates you. Am I missing anything?”



#### Adapting MI Strategies

Remember to use short, simple sentences.



### MI Strategy for Guardian or Family Member

Use reflective listening to rephrase what family members say about oral health goals.

#### Example:

“You’re worried what will happen if [person you support] doesn’t start making healthier food choices.”

“It sounds like you want to create a goal for [person you support] related to flossing.”



## Next Steps

These are additional resources that will help you and the person you support keep thinking about this topic after your conversation is over:

- [Daily Mouth Care Action Plan](#)
- [Daily Mouth Care Action Plan: Brainstorming Goals](#)
- [Action Plan Video](#)



# Oral Health Care Success

Now that you have completed each part of this program, it is time to combine all you have learned. You are ready to start improving the oral health of the person or people you support.

Remember, you are not alone. If you need more support, talk with the dental team of the person you support.



## Caregiver Responsibilities:



Identify the strengths and skills of the person you support.

Identify any [barriers](#) to good oral health.



[Establish daily mouth care routines](#) that include twice-daily toothbrushing with [fluoride toothpaste](#) and daily flossing.

Create a [Daily Mouth Care Action Plan](#) to promote the oral health goals.



[Perform some or all parts of the daily mouth sessions](#) for the person(s) you support.

Partner with the dental team to make [dental visits](#) successful.



Use [behavior supports](#) and [goal tracking](#) to improve daily mouth care sessions.

Use [safety strategies](#) to limit the spread of germs during daily mouth care.



Document and report [oral health concerns](#).

Respond appropriately to [oral health emergencies](#).



# Motivational Interviewing: Oral Health Care Success

## Better Conversations, Better Oral Health

Use these motivational interviewing (MI) strategies to talk about oral health with the person you support.



### MI Strategy for the Person You Support

Use open-ended questions to discover oral health goals for the person you support.

#### Example:

“What would you change about your mouth?”

“What do you wish was easier about brushing your teeth?”



### Adapting MI Strategies

Remember to use short, simple sentences.



### MI Strategy for Guardian or Family Member

Use summaries to transition from identifying a problem to creating an action plan.

#### Example:

“Let me see if I understand so far. You aren’t opposed to [person you support] going to the dentist, but you are overwhelmed trying to find one that accepts patients with disabilities. And you feel like there’s a lot of pressure on you to make the appointment successful. That is stressful for you too. But since we talked about ways we can help you and [person you support], you’re feeling more optimistic. Is there anything you want to add?”

## Next Steps

These are additional resources that will help you and the person you support keep thinking about this topic after your conversation is over:

- [Why I Clean My Teeth Handout](#)
- [Daily Mouth Care Action Plan](#)
- [Putting it All Together Video](#)



# ACCESS FOR ALL SMILES

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# Definitions

Below is a list of terms that will be helpful for you to know as you move through this program.

**The ABC Model** – A way to prevent behavioral problems by predicting an unwanted behavior and working to make changes before it happens.

**Abscess** – A pocket of bacteria with infection located in the gums.

**Cavities** – Also called dental decay or caries. This is a hole in a tooth after bacteria has caused the enamel to decay.

**Daily mouth care session** – Any oral health care that happens in one sitting on a daily basis.

**Daily mouth care plan** – A plan that details oral health goals for a person and the steps that are needed to reach those goals.

**Dental disease** – A variety of conditions that can affect parts of the mouth, often caused by poor oral hygiene. Includes (but is not limited to) cavities, gum disease, oral cancer and abscess.

**Dental health** – This can mean that the teeth, gums and other parts of the mouth are healthy. It can also mean the actions you take to keep your teeth healthy. See also “Oral health.”

**Dentures** – A removable appliance that holds one or more artificial teeth.

**Desensitization** – A way to change a person’s behavior by breaking a large task into small parts and letting a person get used to each small part.

**Dry mouth** – This is when a person’s mouth is almost always dry, even when they have had plenty of water. Many times, it happens because of a medication or medical condition.

**Flossing** – Cleaning between teeth to remove plaque and food. Floss string may be used. In some cases, special picks or brushes designed to go between the teeth can be helpful.

**Fluoride** – A mineral that makes teeth stronger when added through water, fluoridated toothpaste, or a fluoride treatment from the dentist.

**Gum disease** – Also called periodontitis. An infection in the gums that can cause redness, swelling, bleeding and even tooth loss.

**Modified tools** – Dental cleaning tools that have been changed to make them easier to use. Modifications are often needed for people who have limited dexterity in their hands.

**Nutrition** – Food and drinks that give your body the nutrients it needs to survive.

**Oral health** – This can mean that the mouth is healthy. It can also mean the actions you take to keep your mouth healthy. See also “Dental health.”

**Periodontitis** – Also called gum disease. An infection in the gums that can cause redness, swelling, bleeding and even tooth loss.

**Plaque** – A sticky substance that builds up on your teeth throughout the day. It has bacteria, saliva and residue from food and drink.

**Reinforcement** – A way to change a person’s behavior by giving a positive reward (positive reinforcement) or taking away a negative experience (negative reinforcement) after the person does a desired behavior.

**Shaping** – Also called phasing. A way to change a person’s behavior by breaking a large task into small parts and rewarding the person after they do a part of the task.

**Standard Precautions** – Treating all bodily fluids as if they could carry infection. When brushing a person’s teeth, you could touch their saliva or blood. Use caution as if they could infect you.

**Toothbrushing techniques** – A variety of ways to brush your teeth.

- **Bass** – Holding the toothbrush at a 45° angle to the teeth and gums, brushing in circles.
- **Modified Bass** – Brushing in circles, like the Bass technique, but adding a swiping motion from the gums toward the chewing surface of the teeth.
- **Fones** – Brushing in circles, like the Bass technique, but without holding the toothbrush at a particular angle. This technique is preferred for people with limited use of their hands.

# Task Breakdown

Each task in daily mouth care can be broken down into a series of small steps. This process is part of desensitization and shaping. The following is an example of how to break down the task of brushing teeth.



## Toothbrushing Steps

1. Gather supplies (toothbrush, fluoride toothpaste).
2. Pick up toothbrush.
3. Move to sink.\*
4. Turn on water.
5. Wet toothbrush to soften toothpaste.
6. Turn off water.
7. Pick up toothpaste.
8. Open the toothpaste lid.
9. Squeeze toothpaste onto toothbrush.
10. Close the toothpaste lid.
11. Put toothpaste tube away.
12. Place toothbrush against teeth.
13. Position bristles half on teeth and half on gums.
14. Gently brush in small circular motions for 2 minutes.
15. Brush all sides of all the teeth.
16. Spit out toothpaste and saliva.
17. Turn on water.
18. Rinse the toothbrush.
19. Put away toothbrush.



Be sure you have appropriate expectations for the person you support. You may need to break a task down into even smaller steps.

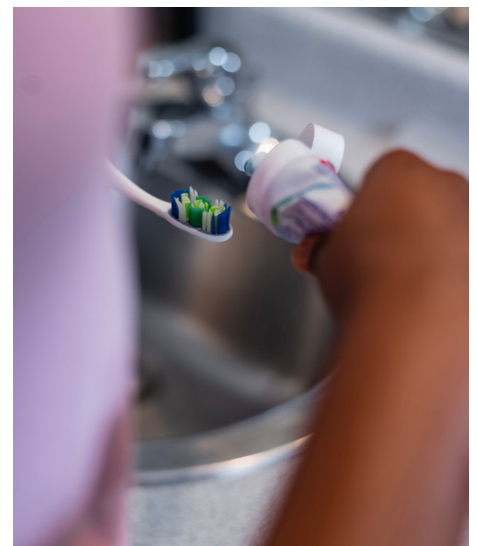
Gently introduce each step and give the person you support time to build skills at their own pace. Consider incentives to encourage success.

\*Daily mouth care can happen outside of the bathroom if needed, but this example is for a person who is working to brush their teeth in a traditional bathroom setting.

## Recommended Video



- [Desensitization & Shaping](#)

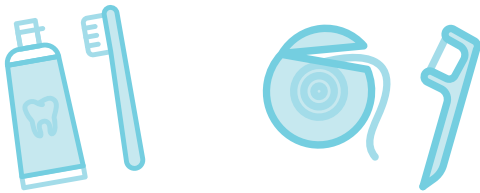


# Steps to Cleaning Teeth



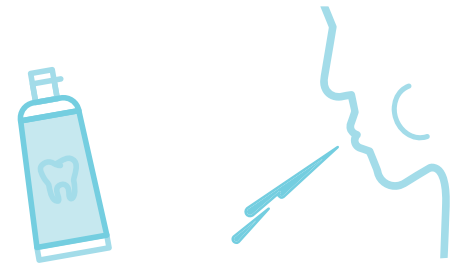
1

First, I get the supplies. I need my toothbrush, toothpaste and floss.



2

I spit out the toothpaste.



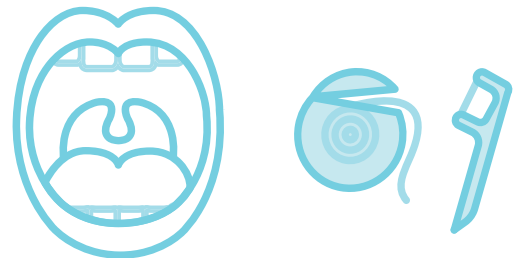
5

I wet my toothbrush and then put toothpaste on.



3

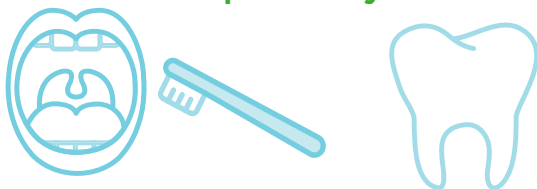
Next, I floss between my teeth.



6

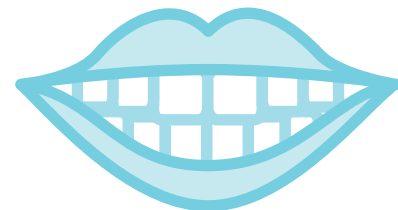
I brush:

- the front of my teeth
- the back of my teeth
- the tops of my teeth



4

Last, I put away the supplies. I did a great job cleaning my teeth!



7

## Recommended Video



- [Daily Care Basics](#)

**Instructions:** Cut along dotted lines. Stack pages in order with page 1 on the top. Staple on left side to create a book.

A5

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# Weekly Menu Plan

Take steps toward your nutrition goals. Use this menu to plan a week of nutrient-dense meals.



Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

## Recommended Video:



- [Decay & Nutrition](#)

# Weekly Menu Plan

Take steps toward your nutrition goals. Use this menu to plan a week of nutrient-dense meals.



Week of: June 13-19

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
<b>Monday</b>	Oatmeal with fresh fruit	Spinach salad with apple slices, nuts, cheese and light dressing	Whole grain pasta with tomato sauce and turkey meatballs	Vegetables and hummus
<b>Tuesday</b>	Whole grain toast with peanut butter	Lean chicken, vegetables and hummus wrap	Baked sweet potato topped with chili Greek yogurt with fresh fruit	Apples with peanut butter
<b>Wednesday</b>	Oatmeal with fresh fruit	Spinach salad with apple slices, nuts, cheese and light dressing	Whole grain pasta with tomato sauce and turkey meatballs	Vegetables and hummus
<b>Thursday</b>	Whole grain toast with peanut butter	Lean chicken, vegetables and hummus wrap	Baked sweet potato topped with chili Greek yogurt with fresh fruit	Apples with peanut butter
<b>Friday</b>	Oatmeal with fresh fruit	Spinach salad with apple slices, nuts, cheese and light dressing	Whole grain pasta with tomato sauce and turkey meatballs	Vegetables and hummus
<b>Saturday</b>	Greek yogurt, granola and fresh fruit	Lean chicken, vegetables and hummus wrap	Cauliflower crust pizza with vegetable toppings Breadsticks	Apples with peanut butter
<b>Sunday</b>	Scrambled eggs, whole grain toast and fresh fruit	Hearty chicken and vegetable soup	Baked sweet potato topped with chili Greek yogurt with fresh fruit	Vegetables and hummus

## Recommended Video:



- [Decay & Nutrition](#)



# Brushing & Flossing Tracker

Remember to brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and floss once a day. Use this chart to keep track of your healthy mouth care habits.

1. Check each sun icon when you brush in the morning.
2. Check each moon icon when you brush in the evening.
3. Check each floss icon when you floss.

Visit the dentist every six months, or sooner if you need to.

Check for changes in your mouth like bleeding, pain or swelling. Learn more about oral health issues in the Injuries & Safety section.



Month: \_\_\_\_\_

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

## Recommended Videos



- [Daily Care Basics](#)
- [Offering Incentives](#)

# First Aid for Oral Health Emergencies

## Remember:

- Stay calm
- Wear gloves:
  - If blood is present.
  - If you need to touch the person's mouth, teeth or lips.

Dentist phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

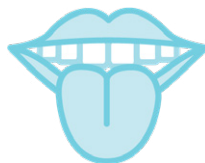
Nurse phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Broken tooth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gently clean dirt, debris or food from the injured area with warm water.</li> <li>• Place a cold compress on the face over the injured area.</li> <li>• Locate and save any broken tooth fragments if possible.</li> <li>• Contact supervisor or health professional.</li> </ul>
<b>Broken filling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact supervisor or health professional.</li> </ul>
<b>Cut or bitten tongue, lip or cheek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean area with a clean, wet cloth.</li> <li>• Apply pressure with cloth to stop the bleeding.</li> <li>• Apply ice to the swollen or bruised area. If bleeding non-stop after 15 minutes or with pressure, contact a supervisor or health professional.</li> </ul>
<b>Knocked out permanent tooth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find the tooth. Handle by the crown (top) of the tooth, not the root.</li> <li>• Rinse dirt and debris off the tooth with milk; do not scrub tooth. Put back in the gums, if possible.</li> <li>• Put the tooth into a cup of fresh milk. Do not put the tooth into tap water.</li> <li>• Contact a supervisor or health professional.</li> <li>• See a dentist within 60 minutes.</li> </ul>
<b>Toothache or abscess</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rinse the mouth well with warm salt water to remove any food debris.</li> <li>• If the face is swollen, place a cold compress on the outside of the cheek.</li> <li>• Contact a supervisor or health professional.</li> </ul>
<b>Possible broken jaw</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediately call 911.</li> </ul>

## Recommended Video:



- [Injury & Safety](#)



A9

# Dental Visit Checklist

Dentist appointment date and time: \_\_\_\_\_

## One Week Before

- Confirm appointment with dental office.
- Remind person you support about the appointment.
- Write down any thoughts, questions or concerns for the dentist.

## One Day Before

- Call and talk to office administration about what to expect including:
  - Where the patient will wait after check-in.
  - Behavior plans.
  - What procedures and treatment will happen at the appointment.
  - Plan for scheduling the next appointment.
  - When and how to make payments.
- Review the schedule and procedures for the appointment with the person you support.
- Finalize notes about thoughts, questions or concerns for the dentist.
- Write down medications or any new medical information the dentist needs to know.



## The Day Of

- Pack:
  - Insurance information.
  - Daily mouth care action plan.
  - Any notes with information for the dentist.
  - Comfort items, fidgets, headphones or other items for appointment.
  - Incentive items, if using.
  - A sweatshirt for the person you support in case the office is cold.
- Review the plans for the appointment with the person you support.



## Recommended Videos:



- [Dental Visits](#)
- [Offering Incentives](#)

A10

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# Adaptations, Positions & Behavior Support

Use this form to track and analyze each position and/or adaptation the person you support uses during mouth care. Change to a blank sheet when the plans or goals change.

For more on adaptations and positions, see [Adaptations and Positions](#).



This plan is current as of: \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Initials of Caregiver	Position or Adaptation	Other Information	What Worked	What Did Not Work	What to Change Next Time
5/29/22, ANM EXAMPLE	Seated	Brought a stool into the bathroom	Could see all teeth to brush	Used a stool but needed more back support	Store folding chair in bathroom

## Recommended Videos



- [Adaptations & Positions](#)
- [Scenario: Lying Down](#)
- [Scenario: Seated](#)
- [Scenario: Reclined](#)

A11

# Daily Mouth Care Action Plan: Brainstorming Goals

The Daily Mouth Care Action Plan includes space to create and track goals related to nutrition, daily mouth care and dental visits. Here are ideas for goals related to these topics.



## Ideas for Daily Mouth Care Goals

- Transition into a daily mouth care session.
- Open mouth for mouth care.
- Tolerate having teeth or gums touched.
- Tolerate brushing.
- Tolerate flossing.
- Complete daily mouth care independently.
- Brush independently.
- Brush for two minutes.
- Floss independently.
- Brush two times a day.
- Floss once a day.
- Set out or clean up daily mouth care supplies independently.
- Complete denture care independently.
- Help with denture care.
- Use product adaptation.



## Ideas for Nutrition Goals

- Increase water intake.
- Decrease soda intake.
- Decrease alcohol intake.
- Increase nutrient-dense food intake.
- Reduce daily sugar intake.
- Healthy food swaps.
- Help with meal planning.
- Help with grocery shopping.
- Help with cooking.
- Don't eat after the second daily mouth care session.



## Ideas for Dental Visit Goals

- Meet with the dental team.
- Choose an accommodation (e.g., sunglasses, headphones or weighted blanket).
- Sit in an exam chair.
- Open mouth for the dental team.
- Tolerate having teeth examined.
- Tolerate full dental exam.
- Tolerate teeth cleaning.
- Tolerate partial teeth cleaning.
- Tolerate dental X-rays.
- Tolerate a specific dental procedure.



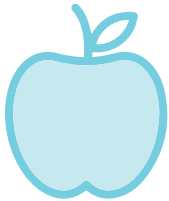
A12

# Why I Clean My Teeth



1

I need healthy teeth for biting and chewing my food.



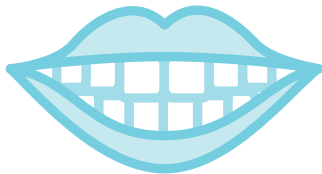
2

If I don't clean my teeth, they will get sore. I might get sick, and I won't be able to chew my food.



5

Healthy teeth help me smile. Then I can share my smile with other people.



3

I will brush my teeth two times a day and floss once a day.



6

Brushing and flossing my teeth every day keeps them healthy.



4

Draw a picture of your smile!

7

## Recommended Videos



- [Daily Care Basics](#)
- [Decay & Nutrition](#)

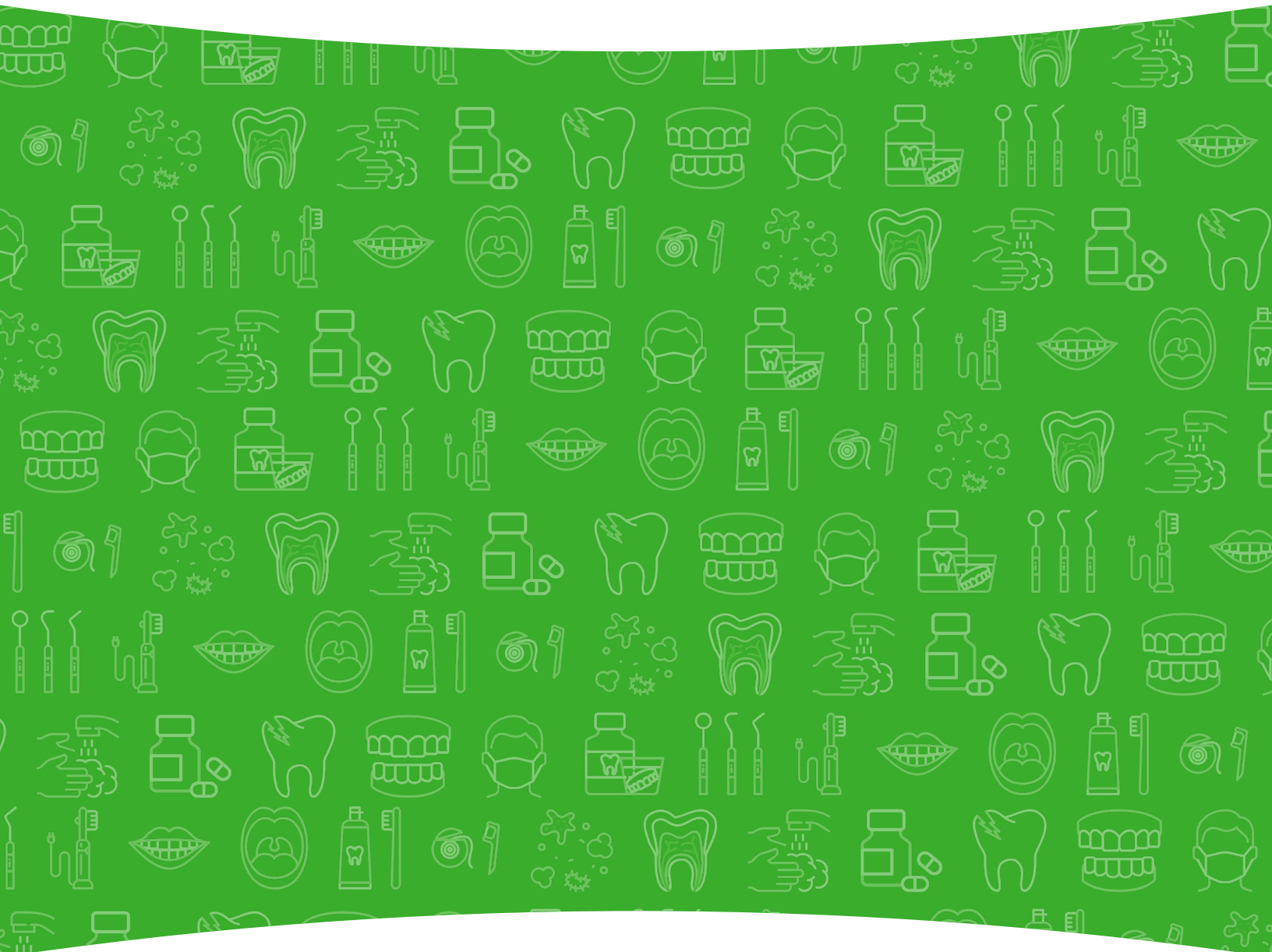
**Instructions:** Cut along dotted lines. Stack pages in order with page 1 on the top. Staple on left side to create a book.

A13

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