

Mouth Care Without a Battle[©]

Strategies for Resistive Behaviors



Behavioral Symptom	Person-Centered Techniques
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the resident • Approach from the front and make gradual movements • Smile and maintain eye contact • Ask permission before starting • Speak slowly; use simple phrases • Ask one question at a time • Focus on the resident rather than the task • Explain each step • Complete as many steps as possible • Give reasons for what you're doing • Be patient, repeat yourself as appropriate • Give positive feedback and encouragement
Resident Refuses Mouth Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure out why the resident is refusing (e.g. bad time, pain, fear) and change approach accordingly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If pain, check for broken teeth or infection and notify nurse - If fear, provide comforting object or reassure and rub shoulder/arm • Come back later when the resident is more receptive to care • Talk with the resident before starting mouth care • Develop a routine (e.g. every day at the same time with the same caregiver) • Provide a reason (e.g. let me get the food out of your teeth so you'll be more comfortable)
Resident Won't Open His/Her Mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell-show-do techniques to promote understanding • Touch the mouth, cheek, or jaw with the toothbrush to prompt to open • Gently insert toothbrush to clean front surfaces of teeth • Gently pull down on lip or chin • Ask the resident to say "ah" • Ask resident to open mouth and then open your mouth (modeling the behavior) • Take the resident to the bathroom sink (the mirror and sink may help cue them to brush teeth) • Sing with the resident • Be patient, try small talk, provide a reason for mouth care • Come back at a time when the resident might be more responsive

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<p>Resident Resists Care by Grabbing, Holding, or Playing with an Object</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand the resident the toothbrush and invite to brush • Reassure and rub shoulder/arm to help relax • Distract or redirect by pausing, singing, talking • Hand the resident an object to hold and keep hands busy • Use a second caregiver to talk, reassure and/or hold resident's hands during mouth care • Gently hold the resident's hand and talk
<p>Resident Bites Toothbrush</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gently wiggle the toothbrush and ask to open mouth • Insert a smaller brush to work around the toothbrush • Gently rub cheek to relax jaw muscle • Slide finger along the inside of the cheek and massage jaw
<p>Resident Shows Physical or Verbal Aggression</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distract the resident (e.g. singing, dancing, conversation, watching TV) • Stop and check for pain; come back later • Pick another time of day when the resident is calmer (e.g. early morning while sleepy) • Try another caregiver with whom the resident is comfortable • Use a second caregiver to talk, reassure and/or hold resident's hands during care • Check for broken teeth, sore spots, infection (notify nurse)
<p>Resident Has Trouble Swallowing, or Cannot Spit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a small amount of antimicrobial rinse • Use only a pinhead of paste • Provide care sitting up • Have resident tilt head forward and put a cup under the mouth to encourage spitting • Avoid swishing
<p>Trouble Removing or Reinserting Dentures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the resident to remove or reinsert dentures • Ask to open mouth so you can remove/put in their dentures • Gently touch the mouth or cheek to prompt to open mouth