

Mouth Care for People Living Life After a Stroke



This leaflet provides information on how to look after your mouth and access dental services following your stroke.



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WHY IS MOUTHCARE SO IMPORTANT?

A healthy mouth will: -



- **Prevent discomfort**
- **Maintain good nutrition**
- **Reduce risk of aspiration pneumonia**
- **Minimise risk of other serious conditions e.g. cardiovascular disease**

AND... MAINTAIN YOUR BEAUTIFUL SMILE

The main problems you may have: -



- **Difficulty swallowing**
- **Drooling**
- **Dry mouth**
- **Denture problems**
- **Increase in tooth decay**
- **Gum infections**

DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING



If you have a swallowing problem, ask your stroke nurse, speech and language therapist or dental team for individual advice about how to keep your mouth and teeth clean.

DRY MOUTH



Some medication can make your mouth dry, this may affect taste or swallowing.



A dry mouth may cause problems with eating, an increase in tooth decay and gum disease. It can also make dentures harder to control.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY DRY MOUTH?

ADVICE

Frequent sips of water are best for a dry mouth. There are also gels or sprays you can use to help your dry mouth.

ASK

Ask your stroke team, dentist, or pharmacist about saliva substitutes.

Fluoride



See your dentist regularly. You may be prescribed a high fluoride toothpaste to keep your teeth healthy.



Avoid sugary drinks and snacks as these will damage your teeth.



Food supplements can also increase your chance of developing tooth decay. Rinse your mouth with water after taking them.

HOW TO LOOK AFTER MY TEETH AND GUMS?



Brush your teeth or clean your dentures after every meal. Try to aim for at least twice a day.



Discuss using a high Fluoride toothpaste with the dental team and ensure your toothbrush is dry prior to brushing. Use a pea-size amount of toothpaste.



Spit out but do NOT rinse out your mouth after brushing.



If you are having difficulty brushing your teeth there are different brushes that can help. For example, a 3-sided brush or electric toothbrush with rotating action.



Toothbrushes can be adapted for you. Ask the dental team.



If you need assistance brushing your teeth. Ask the dental team or oral health champion in your care home for specific training.

HOW DO I LOOK AFTER MY DENTURE?



Your dentures must be kept clean to avoid mouth infections.



Always remove your denture to clean them. Use soap, water, and a toothbrush.



Brush dentures over sink or bowl of water as if you drop them, they are less likely to break.



If you can only use one hand to clean your dentures. A denture brush with suction cups allows for one-handed cleaning.



Leave your dentures out at night and store in a dry lidded container. Clean the denture container daily.



A stroke can cause the muscles in your face and jaw to weaken. This may cause denture wearing problems. Ask advice from the dental team. They may be able to adapt your dentures.

HOW TO ACCESS DENTAL TREATMENT AFTER YOUR STROKE?



Accessing dental treatment will depend on the effect of your stroke.

Please contact your general dentist in the first instance. They will be able to sign post to specialist services if required.

If you do not have a dentist. Please contact the dental helpline:

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board:

TEL: 01633 744387

EMAIL: ABBDental.helpline@wales.nhs.uk

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board:

TEL: 03001020247 (Option 1)

EMAIL: Cardiffandvale.gds@wales.nhs.uk

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

TEL: RCT/Merthyr Tydfil - **01443 680168/ 01443 680166**

TEL: Bridgend - **0300 123 5060**

Out of Hours: **0300 123 5060**



If you can't get to your dentist surgery, ask if the dental team can visit you at home.