

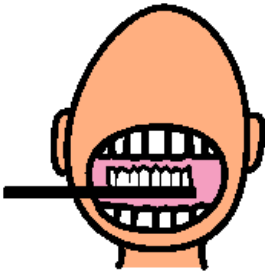
## **Disability Resource Hub Disclaimer**

The material on the Disability Resource Hub is for reference only. No claim or representation is made or warranty given, express or implied, in relation to any of the material. You use the material entirely at your own risk.

The material is provided as point-in-time reference documents. FACS does not maintain the material and does not undertake to ensure that it is accurate, current, suitable or complete.

Where conditions and warranties implied by law cannot be excluded, FACS limits its liability where it is entitled to do so. Otherwise, FACS is not liable for any loss or damage (including consequential loss or damage) to any person, however caused (including for negligence), which may arise directly or indirectly from the material or the use of such material.

## Why all the fuss about Oral Care Plans?



- People with disabilities have more oral health problems than people without disabilities.
- They receive less oral health care and it is often of a lower quality. <sup>1</sup>
- There is a clear link between having dysphagia (swallowing difficulties), poor oral health and getting aspiration pneumonia (when food, saliva, liquids, or vomit enters the lungs causing an infection). <sup>2</sup>

### People with intellectual disabilities...



- Often have to rely on someone else to clean their mouth.
- May have a dry mouth or excess saliva, often as a side effect from medications.
- Have a higher rate of reflux. The acid from the reflux can wear down teeth. <sup>3</sup>
- May have trouble communicating pain from reflux or discomfort with their mouth or teeth.
- May not like having their teeth brushed because they are sensitive to touch around their mouths or may not understand what is happening and get distressed.
- May not be able to clean their teeth properly by themselves due to their difficulties using their hands.
- May have poorer diets or make less healthy food choices e.g. foods high in sugar, fruit juice and soft drink.

### What can you do?

- Follow the person's individual Oral Care Plan.
- Whenever possible, involve the people you are supporting in their own oral care routines by using simple instructions and showing them what to do.
- Attend regular dental reviews – usually once every year.
- Even if they do not have teeth, good oral care is very important to keep their gums, tongue and saliva clean and healthy.
- Lookout for changes in a person's eating or other behaviours that may be due to sensitive teeth or a sore mouth e.g. poking fingers in mouth, refusing to eat certain foods etc.
- Make a referral to a Speech Pathologist as oral care problems can affect a person's swallowing.
- Encourage healthy eating and offer alternatives to sugary foods.