

Disability Resource Hub Disclaimer

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Looking after your teeth



If you don't brush your teeth, this is what can happen:

1. You get sick – tooth decay, gingivitis, disease causing teeth to fall out. Sick teeth leads to a sick body: heart disease, stroke, diabetes.
2. It's painful – it will be harder to eat and you won't enjoy it as much.
3. You might lose too much weight because it hurts when you eat. Then you won't be healthy or have energy to do fun things.
4. Your breath becomes smelly. You might get embarrassed and not want to hang around other people.
5. Your teeth will look bad and you might not want to hang around other people.

Handy hints*:

Try visiting the dentist before the appointment; get familiar with your dentist and what the place looks like.

- Talk or show photos about your visit (e.g. the dentist will wear a mask; there'll be a big light so they can look at your teeth. The dentist will touch your teeth. It might feel funny).
- Do something positive after you visit the dentist (e.g. "after the dentist, we'll go and see a movie")

Do you have swallowing problems?

- Try using "low foam" toothpaste or mouthwash instead of regular toothpaste.
- Use a cloth with mouthwash on it to clean your teeth and mouth.

Do you have a dry mouth?

- Try using artificial saliva, spray water in your mouth, and chew gum or mints.

Do you have trouble holding a toothbrush or floss?

- Try different kinds of toothbrushes (e.g. with a thick handle) or flossing tools.
- Try "hand on hand" (someone holds your hand as you brush your teeth)

Also:

- Try using a 3- sided toothbrush or electric toothbrush so it takes less time to brush.
- Make it a part of your routine
- If you support someone to brush their teeth, think about how they can get more involved.
- Using a mirror, music or showing the steps might help (e.g. tell, show, do)

Find these handy hints on this website:

www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/individuals/support/somewhere_to_live/accommodation-support

*Check with your dentist, dental nurse, or therapist about whether these handy hints suit you or someone you support.

Healthy teeth =

Healthy and pain-free mouth and body

More enjoyment at mealtimes

Less traumatic visits to the dentist

Less aggression because you're not in pain

You look better

Better lifestyle - more involved in your life and with others

Less risk of choking and getting sick from a dirty mouth



You can write an "oral health plan" for someone you support, with family, the dentist or GP.

This shows people the best way to clean your teeth and mouth, even if you don't have teeth).

Find the oral health plan template on the website. From time to time, check the plan is working and improve it as needed.



Family & Community Services