

## Useful information

|                                  |  |                              |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Ashton, Leigh &amp; Wigan</b> | Leigh Health Centre<br>Pemberton Health Centre | 01942 483401<br>01942 481930 |
| <b>Bolton</b>                    | Lever Chambers                                 | 01204 403215                 |
| <b>Bury</b>                      | Moorgate Primary Care Centre                   | 0161 4779866                 |
| <b>Chester</b>                   | Fountains Health Centre                        | 01244 385563                 |
| <b>Halton</b>                    | Hallwood Health Centre                         | 01928 593400                 |
| <b>Heywood</b>                   | Phoenix Centre                                 | 01706676743                  |
| <b>Rochdale</b>                  | Nye Bevan House                                | 01706 677017                 |
| <b>Oldham</b>                    | Oldham Integrated Care Centre                  | 0161 6213614                 |
| <b>St Helens</b>                 | St Helens Dental Clinic                        | 01744 731395                 |
| <b>Stockport</b>                 | Kingsgate House                                | 0161 2044720                 |
| <b>Tameside &amp; Glossop</b>    | Ashton Primary Care Centre                     | 0161 3427150                 |
| <b>Trafford</b>                  | Seymour Grove Health Centre                    | 0161 7863331                 |
| <b>Warrington</b>                | Bath St. Health & Wellbeing Centre             | 01925 946293                 |
| <b>Widnes</b>                    | Healthcare Resource Centre                     | 0151 4955042                 |
| <b>Winsford</b>                  | Dene Drive Primary Care Centre                 | 01606 544188                 |

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**Bridgewater  
Community Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

## Community Dental Service

**Information for patients and carers  
about oral care for people  
with swallowing difficulties**



Quality first and foremost

## Good oral hygiene

Good oral hygiene is important to the health and well being of everyone. It is especially important for those people who have the added problems of swallowing or feeding difficulties. This is because there is strong evidence that poor oral hygiene can increase the risk of aspiration pneumonia.

**If you have to help with cleaning someone's teeth it is important to protect their airway. This prevents liquids being inhaled into the lungs. Your practice nurse / district nurse can advise you how best to do this.**

## Cleaning natural teeth

- Use a small soft dry toothbrush.
- Only use a **smear** of family fluoride toothpaste, chlorhexidine gel or a non / low foaming toothpaste (if recommended by your dentist).
- Brush all surfaces of the teeth and gums with a gentle circular brushing motion.
- Spit out excess toothpaste / saliva or wipe away with gauze or a flannel.
- Do not rinse teeth with water or mouthwash. The small amount of fluoride in the toothpaste that remains on the teeth can help to strengthen and protect them.
- Moisturise lips to prevent them chapping or cracking. Use a lanolin based cream if you or the patient is on oxygen therapy.

## Cleaning dentures

- Dentures should be removed and brushed with toothpaste after meals and at bedtime.
- Gums should be brushed with a soft toothbrush or wiped with gauze moistened with chlorhexidine mouthwash.
- Dentures should always be left in cold water overnight.
- Moisturise lips to prevent them cracking or chapping. Use a lanolin based cream if the patient is on oxygen therapy.

## Common oral problems

- Dry mouth (xerostomia)
- Soft tissue infection
- Bad breath (halitosis)
- Fungal infections such as thrush.
- Gums bleeding
- Tooth decay
- Sore, cracked lips

## Remember

Teeth can still be damaged even if you or the patient are unable to eat or drink normally. Stomach contents can sometimes flow back into the mouth; this is called a reflux action. These strong stomach acids can weaken and damage the tooth enamel.

Gum disease can occur because plaque bacteria will build up on teeth and gums. If this is not removed regularly gums will become red, swollen and will bleed when brushed.