



Swallow  
Aware

# How to Help People With Swallowing Difficulties Keep Their Mouths Clean

## Information For Carers and Staff



### Why is oral hygiene important?

Daily oral care is important for every person regardless of medical condition, presence or absence of teeth and even when Nil by Mouth.

→ For people with swallowing difficulties inadequate mouth care can increase the risk of chest infections and aspiration pneumonia

### How to help with oral hygiene:

- Encourage the person to brush their own teeth twice daily for two minutes.
- Use a smear of low foaming toothpaste e.g. Pronamel / Oranurse on a dry toothbrush.
- Clean the whole mouth (tongue / teeth / gums).
- If you are assisting, stand behind the person tilting their head slightly forward to reduce their risk of swallowing residue or toothpaste.
- Spit out toothpaste, do not rinse.
- For those at increased risk of choking please seek further advice from a dentist.

### Dentures should be:

- Removed at night
- Cleaned twice daily
- Labelled with persons name
- Stored in a named denture box

**NIL BY MOUTH  
DOES **NOT** MEAN NO  
NEED FOR MOUTH CARE**

