



# Oral Health Tip Sheet for Older Adults and Care Partners

A healthy mouth is important to your overall health. With a healthy mouth, you can enjoy your food, talk with friends, smile or even laugh at a joke, and live without pain or discomfort. **Dry mouth, tooth decay, gum disease and pain don't have to be part of getting older.**

## To have a healthy mouth

- ✓ Brush and floss every day. A staff person can help you with brushing and flossing.
- ✓ Check your mouth for any signs of a mouth problem.
- ✓ Tell a staff person if you notice any signs of a mouth problem.
- ✓ Make sure your dentures fit well and feel comfortable.
- ✓ Ask a staff person if you need any assistance in performing your daily oral care.

## Brushing

**Brush 2 times every day.** Brush once in the morning and once before bed.

**Brush all of your teeth, gums and tongue.** Don't forget about your teeth along the sides and in the back.

**Brush in a circular motion.** Be gentle.

## Flossing

**Floss every day.** It's best to floss before bedtime.

**Floss between each tooth.** Use a gentle back and forth motion to bring the floss to the gum line.

**Slide the floss up and down along the sides of each tooth.** You can use a little pressure, but never force the floss.

## Do you wear dentures or partial dentures?

It's important to clean your dentures every day before bedtime. Before you remove your dentures, place a folded towel in front of you to protect your dentures in case they fall.

- 1 Rinse your mouth with warm water.
- 2 Remove your dentures. Check them for cracks or sharp edges.
- 3 Clean your dentures using a denture brush and denture cleaner. Make sure to clean the grooves that fit against your gums.
- 4 Soak your dentures overnight. Always rinse your dentures before putting them back in your mouth.
- 5 If you wear partial dentures, continue brushing and flossing your teeth.



## Signs of a mouth problem

Loose tooth

Broken tooth

Sensitive teeth

Red or swollen gums

Tender or bleeding gums

Pain

Sores

Unpleasant taste

