

# TIPS TO IMPROVE ORAL HEALTH IN LONG-TERM CARE

Many leading health care groups across the country want people of all ages to know the care they take of their oral health – lips, gums, teeth and tongue – is important to their overall health. This is especially true for older adults who have unique oral health needs and may not be able to care for their own oral health.

The steps listed on this tip sheet are designed to help direct care providers learn ways to improve the oral health care provided to long-term care residents.



## 1 GET YOUR TOOLKIT READY



**TOOTHBRUSH**  
Use a soft brush and allow the brush to dry each day



**TOOTHPASTE**  
Use fluoride toothpaste with the ADA Seal of Acceptance



**FLOSS AND FLOSS AIDS**



**MASKS**



**GLOVES**  
Avoid latex gloves due to the potential for allergic reaction

## 2 GO SLOW AND EXPLAIN CLEARLY



Schedule a specific time and develop a routine for oral care



Coach residents to do as much of the cleaning as possible



Clean a few teeth then allow residents to rest

## 3 FLOSS AND BRUSH GENTLY



Brush at the gum line with brush half on the gum and half on the teeth



If residents are unwilling, evaluate the nature of the problem and re-approach

## CARING FOR DENTURES AND PARTIALS



Coach residents to do as much of the cleaning as possible



Use denture cleaning products with the ADA Seal of Acceptance



Always rinse before putting back in mouth



Handle with care – to avoid breaking, clean over a folded towel or sink full of water



Avoid cleaning with bleach or toothpaste



Brush and rinse daily with a soft-bristle brush



Soak in denture cleaner overnight

