

## OBJECTIVES:

- To have a basic knowledge of oral care in English
- To get to know new words useful in the work
- To be able to practice in explaining about oral care

## Oral Care

### Today's Vocabulary

- **gingivitis**: inflammation of the gums, characterized by redness and swelling
- **dental caries**: the formation of cavities in the teeth by the action of bacteria; tooth decay
- **halitosis**: a condition of having offensive-smelling breath; bad breath
- **xerostomia**: abnormal dryness of the mouth
- **pneumonia**: inflammation of one or both lungs caused by bacteria or viruses

Oral care is important for patients' health and well-being for a variety of reasons. Not only is the mouth vital for eating, drinking, taste, breathing, verbal and non-verbal communication, saliva also has antibacterial properties and is part of the body's defense against infection. Poor oral hygiene is well known to be associated with painful, unpleasant diseases such as gingivitis, dental caries, halitosis and xerostomia and, more recently, has been linked to chest infections and pneumonia. Inadequate oral care can be detrimental to social and emotional well-being and adversely affect interaction with others. Poor oral hygiene also increases the risk of infection.

## Infection

### Today's Vocabulary

- **debris**: scattered remains or fragments of food after eating
- **decalcify**: to remove or lose calcium from bones or teeth
- **crevice**: a narrow crack or opening
- **pathogenic**: capable of causing disease

Saliva is essential for keeping oral infections at bay. Its protective, antibacterial properties maintain a healthy balance of resident bacteria, which include Staphylococcus and Candida, and it is also responsible for washing away debris and food particles. Inflammation and infection can occur as a result of reduced saliva production, with the accumulation of debris forming plaque on teeth at the gum line, which leads to gingivitis, dental caries or periodontal disease. The process decalcifies teeth leaving microscopic crevices that can harbor pathogenic organisms, which can lead to abscess formation.

## Best Oral Care Practices

### Today's Vocabulary

- **risk factor:** a variable associated or related with a disease; a determinant
- **floss:** to remove food and dental plaque from teeth using a dental floss
- **antiseptic:** capable of preventing infection by inhibiting the growth of microorganisms
- **paraffin:** a moisturizer; an ointment; a white petroleum jelly
- Daily assessment – identify all risk factors and status of all oral structures, including voice and swallowing.
- Plan oral hygiene with patients if possible.
- Twice daily brushing with toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss if assessment indicates it is safe to do so.
- Use antiseptic mouthwashes twice daily between brushing.
- Use water-based mouthwashes after oral intake.
- Ensure frequent oral fluid intake if condition allows.
- Consider using saliva replacement for dry mouths.
- Keep lips supple and moist with paraffin or lip salve.
- Ensure denture care includes brushing with toothpaste and the use of proprietary dental cleaners.
- Document oral care for evaluation.

### Test Yourself

1. **Why is oral care important?**
2. **What are causes of infection or inflammation in the mouth?**
3. **How are you going to perform oral care to patients? Give at least three ways.**