



LEARNING TOOLS

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GENERAL INFORMATION

SafetyNet Learning Tools are designed to assist in providing information on a specific topic and to be used in a variety of learning environments. These Learning Tools can be used during one-on-one conversations with an individual, or with small and larger groups.

Before beginning a learning session, the presenter should review all SafetyNet Learning Tools on the topic. The trainer can find additional material within the links provided on the SafetyNet Article and Newsletter.

BEFORE THE TRAINING

The presenter should:

- Arrange adequate time and comfortable space for the training and discussion.
- Arrange for any equipment needed, such as a laptop and projector.
- Set up necessary equipment.
- Print or photocopy enough materials for each individual to have their own copy.

TRAINING

The presenter:

- Shows slide show.
- Leads discussion of content and encourages open communication.
- Reviews and discusses information on each of the handouts.
- Asks questions to check for understanding.
- Follows up with additional review and discussion as needed.
- Provide training in multiple sessions to assure adequate coverage and understanding of the topic.



A HEALTHY MOUTH IS A HAPPY MOUTH 😊!

When you have a healthy mouth, you will feel good about your mouth - your teeth and gums - and about yourself!



A healthy mouth:

- 😊 Feels good!
- 😊 Tastes good!
- 😊 Smells good!
- 😊 Looks good!

When you have an **unhealthy mouth**, you may have:

- ☹️ Bad breath
- ☹️ Teeth that hurt
- ☹️ A hard time chewing
- ☹️ A bad taste in your mouth
- ☹️ Gums that hurt, are red, or bleed
- ☹️ Broken, loose or dark-colored teeth

An unhealthy mouth usually has something called plaque (said like “plak”). Plaque sticks to your teeth. It is made up of germs that stay on and between your teeth and gums. You usually cannot see it, but it is bad for teeth and gums. The longer plaque stays on your teeth, the more harm it can do.

You need to keep your teeth and gums clean and free of plaque. If your teeth are dirty and have plaque, you will get an unhealthy mouth.

To have a healthy mouth, follow these three simple steps:

- 1. Brush your teeth two times a day**
- 2. Floss your teeth one time a day; and**
- 3. See your dentist at least one time a year**



1. Brush your teeth two times a day

Regular tooth brushing helps keep your mouth clean and free of plaque. To brush your teeth, you will need:

- A soft toothbrush. You should get a new tooth brush every three months.
- Toothpaste with fluoride to help make your teeth stronger.

Brush your teeth two times a day; in the morning and before you go to bed.

When brushing your teeth:

- ☺ Wash your hands with soap and water.
- ☺ Wet the toothbrush.
- ☺ Use a pea-size amount of toothpaste on your toothbrush.
- ☺ Start with the toothbrush at the gum line.
- ☺ Move the toothbrush in circles on each tooth.
- ☺ Brush the outside, inside and top of each tooth.
- ☺ Brush your teeth for 2 minutes.
- ☺ After you finish, rinse your mouth with water.

Even if you have a few or no teeth, brush your gums to keep your mouth healthy.



2. Floss your teeth one time a day

Flossing helps keep your mouth clean and free of plaque. Your toothbrush cannot reach plaque that collects between your teeth or along your gum line. You need to floss to get the plaque between your teeth.

To floss your teeth, you will need dental floss. Floss at least one time a day in the evening before brushing your teeth and before going to bed.

When flossing your teeth:

- ☺ Start with an arm length of floss (about 18 inches).
- ☺ Wrap the ends of the floss around the middle finger of each hand.
- ☺ Hold the floss tight with your thumbs.
- ☺ Gently slide the floss between your teeth until the floss reaches the gum line.



- ☺ Move the floss up-and-down and back and forth.
- ☺ If the floss gets shredded, use a new piece.
- ☺ To get the floss out, pull it up and away from the teeth.

Other things to know about flossing:

- Try different kinds of floss or flossing aids to see what you like best.
- Flossing is not easy. It takes lots of practice.

Remember to wash your hands before and after cleaning your teeth.



3. See your dentist at least one time a year

See a dentist at least one time a year. Your dentist will check your gums and teeth. The dentist will ask if you have pain in your mouth. The dentist might take pictures (x-rays) of your teeth. The dentist will fix your teeth if something is wrong. The dentist may not finish fixing your teeth on the first visit and you may have to go again.

A dental hygienist (hi-gen-ist) will clean your teeth. This will help get rid of plaque and germs that cause cavities. The dental hygienist will show you the best way to brush and floss.

If you feel pain in a tooth, call to see the dentist. If you wait too long, the pain will get worse.

Watch this [“Why Brush and Floss” video](#) to learn why it is important to brush your teeth.

Eat a healthy diet

Sugary snacks or drinks are bad for your health. They are also bad for your teeth and gums. Sugar makes plaque and germs that stay on your teeth. Here are some tips for a healthy diet:

- Stay away from candy and soda pop.
- Eat snacks like nuts, fruits, and vegetables.
- Drink milk, water, tea, and other sugar-free drinks.
- If you have a sugary snack, brush your teeth or rinse your mouth out with water.



How to Help

Dental Care Support Plans. Individuals should have a dental care plan with steps necessary to keep a healthy mouth. The plan should include:

- Brushing,
- Flossing,
- Getting annual or as needed dental care, and
- Eating a healthy diet.

Each individual should be assisted and supported to develop and follow a dental care plan. Recommendations from the dental team, the dentist and dental hygienist should be included in the person's plan.

The person's circle of support need to know the individual's dental plan. Supporters need to regularly check the progress and work with the individual to help revise the plan as needed.

Each individual will need different kinds of support to follow their plan. For example, some people may need full assistance with brushing and flossing their teeth. Other people may need some or no assistance with brushing and flossing. Still other people will need training and information to learn how and why to brush and floss. The goal is to help the individual become as independent as possible.

Awareness.

- Assist the individual to see their dentist at least one time a year.
- Make a healthy mouth part of regular discussions about overall health.
- Be aware of changes in the person's mouth, those you see and those you hear about.
- Support the individual to see a dentist, if needed, between yearly visits.

Learn about and be aware of things that put people at greater risk for unhealthy teeth and gums, such as some medications, chronic illnesses, and smoking. The dentist or the person's primary care physician can help to identify these risks. They can also tell you about what to do to protect teeth and gums.

Tips. Helpful tips for when the individual requires more support or full assistance:

- Make brushing and flossing a happy experience.
- Create an environment that works for the individual and you.
- Be consistent and keep to a routine.
- Explain any changes so the individual knows what to expect.
- Encourage the individual to participate.
- Give the person as much control as possible to build trust, dignity, and respect.
- Look for changes as you are brushing and flossing.



- Find out what equipment or adaptations may be helpful.
- When helping, make sure to wash your hands and wear gloves.
- Store brushing and flossing supplies properly after each use.

Be positive and be persistent. You CAN be successful in helping individuals have a healthy, happy mouth☺!



Getting Dental Services. California Medi-Cal dental services are called Denti-Cal¹. If someone you support is receiving regional center services and has a Medi-Cal Benefits ID Card, they are eligible for Denti-Cal. Denti-Cal services include an annual dental check-up, x-rays and teeth cleaning. Denti-Cal also includes services the dentist needs to fix teeth and gums.

If someone you support does not have a dentist:

- Go to the Denti-Cal website at www.denti-cal.ca.gov and search for a local dentist, or
- Call the Denti-Cal Beneficiary Services Line at 800-322-6384. Ask for a referral to a local dentist, or
- Talk to your regional center service coordinator about local dentists. Many regional centers have a Dental Coordinator who can help you locate a dentist.

To Get More Information, Go To:

www.ddssafety.net and search the words: teeth, dentist, oral health, brushing, or flossing to learn more about the dental team and the best way to brush and floss teeth.

www.dds.ca.gov/DSPT/Student/StudentYear1_7.pdf for a detailed discussion about dental health and provision of assistance to individuals with special needs. This information will help supporters build knowledge, confidence and ability.

<http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/OralHealth/Topics/DevelopmentalDisabilities/DentalCareEveryDay.htm> for a guide to everyday dental care.

¹ Reference: Denti-Cal Bulletin, June 2012, Volume 28/Number 9, Effective January 13, 2012

Keeping a Healthy Mouth



DDS SafetyNet

PROMOTING CHOICE AND OPTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY
FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Helping Individuals Keep a Healthy Mouth

Dental Care Plans. Each person you support should have a dental care plan with steps necessary to keep a healthy mouth. The plan should include:

- o Frequency and support needed for brushing and flossing,
- o Support needed for getting annual, or as needed, dental care, and
- o Eating a healthy diet.

Each individual should be assisted and supported to develop and follow a dental care plan. Some people may need full assistance with brushing and flossing teeth. Others may need some or no assistance. The goal is to help the individual become as independent as possible. For a sample Dental Care Plan go to www.ddssafety.net, and search for the [Healthy Mouth Plan](#), the [Healthy Mouth Checklist](#), and [Healthy Mouth Planning](#) video.

Help the person follow the plan by:

1. Helping the person understand why it is important to brush and floss regularly.
2. Helping the person to get a dentist and to see the dentist whenever needed.
3. Making a healthy mouth part of an ongoing discussion about overall health.
4. Being aware of changes in an individual's mouth - those you see or those you hear about.
5. Finding ways to make brushing and flossing a happy experience.

Be positive and be persistent. You CAN be successful in helping individuals have a happy, healthy mouth!

When Individuals Need More Assistance with Dental Care

Here are some helpful tips for when the individual requires more support or full assistance:

- o Make brushing and flossing a happy experience. Explain to the individual how you are going to help them to brush their teeth and gums. Use the communication that best fits the individual. This might include plain words, gestures/signs, pictures or objects that will help them understand.
- o Create an environment that works for the individual and you. Make sure the person is relaxed and comfortable. Remember it can be scary and unpleasant to have your teeth brushed by someone else. Take your time, brush slowly and stop for rests.
- o Usually, it is best to stand behind and slightly to one side of the individual. Some people like to sit in front of a mirror so they can see what's happening.





When Individuals Need More Assistance with Dental Care continued.

- o Help the individual to brush their teeth twice a day. Use a small, soft toothbrush and a pea-size amount of toothpaste. Brush the teeth in a circular motion from the gums to the teeth. Replace the toothbrush at least every 3 months. An electric toothbrush could be used, but should be introduced gradually.
- o Be consistent and keep to a routine. Explain any changes so the individual knows what to expect.
- o Encourage the individual to participate. Give the person as much control as possible to build dignity, trust and respect.
- o It doesn't matter if the individual cannot rinse or spit out. It is not harmful to leave some toothpaste in the mouth.
- o Bleeding gums are often frightening. The gums will bleed if they are unhealthy. The only way to make gums better is to brush bacteria away.
- o Look for changes as you are brushing and flossing that may indicate an unhealthy mouth.
- o Try to keep all sugary foods and drinks to meal times. Sugar causes plaque and germs to build up on teeth.
- o Find out what equipment or adaptations may be helpful.
- o Use proper infection control procedures, such as hand washing, wearing gloves, and storing brushing and flossing supplies properly after each use.
- o Know the person's dental health plan and follow it.
- o Most important, be positive and be persistent in supporting individuals to have a healthy, happy mouth!

Find More Information at

www.dds.ca.gov/DSPT/Student/StudentYear1_7.pdf

The information on this site provides additional assistance on dental care.

Getting Dental Services

California Medi-Cal dental services are called Denti-Cal. If the person you support is receiving regional center services and has a Medi-Cal Benefits ID Card, they are eligible for Denti-Cal. Denti-Cal services include an annual dental check-up, x-rays and teeth cleaning. Denti-Cal also includes the services the dentist provides to fix teeth and gums.

If someone you support does not have a dentist:

- o Go to the Denti-Cal website at www.denti-cal.ca.gov and search for a local dentist, or
- o Call the Denti-Cal Beneficiary Services Line at 800-322-6384. Ask for a referral to a local dentist, or
- o Talk to your regional center service coordinator about local dentists. Many regional centers have a dental coordinator who can help you locate a dentist.

For a guide to everyday dental care go to <http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/OralHealth/Topics/DevelopmentalDisabilities/DentalCareEveryDay.htm>





Quick Tips for Assisting Individuals to Keep a Healthy Mouth¹

Helpful tips for when the individual requires more support or full assistance:

- ☺ **Make brushing and flossing a happy experience.** Explain to the individual how you are going to help them to brush their teeth and gums. Use the communication that best fits the individual. This might include plain words, gestures/signs, pictures or objects that will help them understand.
- ☺ **Create an environment that works for the individual and you.** Make sure the person is relaxed and comfortable. Remember it can be scary and unpleasant to have your teeth brushed by someone else. Take your time, brush slowly and stop for rests.
- ☺ Usually, **it is best to stand behind and slightly to one side of the individual.** Some people like to sit in front of a mirror so they can see what's happening.
- ☺ **Help the individual to brush their teeth two times a day.** Use a small, soft toothbrush and pea-size amount of standard toothpaste. Brush the teeth in a circular motion from the gums to teeth. Replace the toothbrush at least every 3 months. An electric toothbrush could be used, but should be introduced gradually.
- ☺ **Be consistent and keep to a routine.** Explain any changes so the individual knows what to expect.
- ☺ **Encourage the individual to participate.** Give the person as much control as possible to build dignity, trust and respect.
- ☺ It doesn't matter if the individual cannot rinse or spit out. **It is not harmful to leave some toothpaste in the mouth.**
- ☺ **Bleeding gums can be frightening.** The gums will bleed if they are unhealthy. The only way to make gums better is to brush bacteria away.
- ☺ **Look for changes** as you are brushing and flossing that may indicate an unhealthy mouth.
- ☺ **Try to keep all sugary foods and drinks to meal times.** Sugar causes plaque and germs to build up on teeth.
- ☺ **Find out what equipment or adaptations may be helpful.**
- ☺ **Use proper infection control procedures,** such as hand washing, wearing gloves and storing brushing and flossing supplies properly after each use.
- ☺ **Know the person's dental health plan** and follow it.
- ☺ Most important, **be positive and be persistent** in supporting individuals to have healthy, happy mouths!

¹ Adapted in part from the **Greenwich** and **Oxleas** Primary and National Health Trusts.



Quick Tips for Having a Healthy Mouth

You CAN have a healthy mouth.

1. Brush your teeth two times a day

Regular tooth brushing helps keep your mouth clean. A clean mouth means no plaque (plak) and germs on your teeth. Things to remember before you brush your teeth:

- You need a soft toothbrush.
- Toothpaste with fluoride helps make your teeth stronger.
- Get a new toothbrush every three months.
- Brush in the morning after breakfast and in the evening before you go to bed.



When brushing your teeth:

- ☺ Wash your hands with soap and water.
- ☺ Wet the toothbrush.
- ☺ Use a pea-size amount of toothpaste on your toothbrush.
- ☺ Start with the toothbrush at the gum line.
- ☺ Move the toothbrush in circles on each tooth.
- ☺ Brush the outside, inside and top of each tooth.
- ☺ Brush your teeth for 2 minutes.
- ☺ After you finish, rinse your mouth with water.

Even if you have a few or no teeth, it is good to brush your gums to keep a healthy mouth.

2. Floss your teeth one time a day

Flossing helps keep your mouth clean and free of plaque. Your toothbrush cannot reach plaque that collects between your teeth or along your gum line. You need to floss to get the plaque between your teeth.

You need dental floss to clean your teeth. Floss at least one time a day in the evening before brushing your teeth and going to bed.



When flossing your teeth:

- ☺ Start with an arm length of floss (about 18 inches).
- ☺ Wrap the ends of the floss around the middle finger of each hand.



- ☺ Hold the floss tight with your thumbs.
- ☺ Gently slide the floss between your teeth until the floss reaches the gum line.
- ☺ Move the floss up-and-down and back and forth.
- ☺ If the floss gets shredded, use a new piece.
- ☺ To get the floss out, pull it up and away from the teeth.

Other things to know about flossing:

- Try different kinds of floss or flossing aids to see what you like best.
- Flossing is not easy. It takes lots of practice.

Remember to wash your hands both before and after cleaning your teeth.



3. See your dentist at least one time a year

See a dentist at least one time a year. Your dentist will check your gums and teeth. The dentist will ask if you are having pain in your mouth. The dentist might take pictures (x-rays) of your teeth. The dentist will fix your teeth if something is wrong. The dentist may not finish fixing your teeth on the first visit and you may have to go again.

A dental hygienist (hi-gen-ist) will clean your teeth. This will help get rid of plaque and germs that cause cavities. The dental hygienist will show you the best way to brush and floss.

If you feel pain in a tooth, call to see the dentist. If you wait too long, the pain will get worse.

To learn more about a trip to the dentist and about brushing and flossing, watch this ["Why Brush and Floss" video](#).

Healthy Mouth Checklist



Does anything make it hard for you to go to the dentist?

Does anything make it easier for you to go?

Please tell us what you eat between meals?

Anything else you would like to tell your dentist about keeping your mouth healthy:

You can fill this out before you go to the dentist. Your dentist will talk with you about how you can keep a healthy mouth. It will help him or her make your visit a good one.



Your Name:

What is your dentist's name?

Do you brush your teeth two times a day?

Yes No

Do you floss at least one time a day?

Yes No

Do you brush your own teeth?

Yes No

If no, what support do you need?

Do you floss your own teeth?

Yes No

If no, what support do you need?

Do your gums bleed when you brush or floss your teeth?

Yes No

Which of these tells us about your mouth:

- I have loose teeth.
- I often have a dry mouth.
- I have gums that bleed.
- It hurts when I chew.
- I often have a bad taste in my mouth.

Can you go to the dentist by yourself?

Yes No

If no, what support do you need?

My Healthy Mouth Plan

Your dentist will help you fill this out.

When is your next visit to the dentist?

When will you brush your teeth?

- After breakfast
- Before you go to bed

When will you floss your teeth?

- Before you go to bed

What support do you need from others to brush?

What support do you need from others to floss?

Do you need to do anything different when you brush or floss?

- Yes** **No**

If yes, what?