

# Oral Hygiene

Daily oral hygiene care is essential to your child's overall well being.

## What Is Oral Hygiene?

When we keep our mouths, gums and teeth clean, we're keeping our mouths healthy. We're practicing good oral hygiene. Good oral hygiene is important because your mouth is the perfect place for bacteria to live and grow. It's warm, dark, wet and a good source of food for bacteria.

## What If a Patient Doesn't Have Good Oral Hygiene?

Patients with poor oral hygiene will encounter two main problems: poor saliva production and the build up of dental plaque, which mean more bacteria in the saliva.

## What If a Patient Practices Good Oral Hygiene Every Day?

Patients who practice good oral hygiene on a daily basis will:

- Lessen the amount of bacteria in their mouths
- Increase their desire to eat
- Increase awareness and movement of food in their mouths
- Get prepared for meals by increasing their taste sensation/salivation

## Parents: Helping Your Child With Oral Hygiene Care

- Build your child's trust. You can do this when you have a consistent routine for providing your child's oral care and don't rush. Take your time.
- Choose a comfortable location for you and your child. A room that isn't the bathroom might be a more comfortable place to brush your child's teeth.
- Brush your child's teeth twice a day at a minimum. If your child isn't able to tolerate a full brushing, just do your best. With patience, we hope that your child will tolerate it for a longer period of time.
- If your child is able to spit, have your child rinse up to three times a day.
- Use water-soluble moisturizer on your child's lips to protect them from drying. You can purchase this at Target, Walmart or your local pharmacy.
- Consider swabbing your child's mouth before and after meals or snacks. Use Toothettes (disposable oral swabs) and sterile water if available. Swab your child's mouth including: teeth, gums, tongue, hard palate and cheeks.
- You should provide morning oral care before eating.

- Be sure you provide a lot of positive reinforcement.

## How Does the Cleaning Help?

- Brushing removes dental plaque from teeth.
- Moisturizing soothes and hydrates the lips.
- Swabbing removes oral debris and secretions, and stimulates oral awareness.

We encourage you to share this information with your child's other caregivers, such as your child's school, personal care attendant and others.

Make An Appointment

[651-290-8707](tel:651-290-8707)

Refer a Patient

[651-325-2200](tel:651-325-2200)

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](tel:651-229-3890).