

Oral Hygiene

Oral health is always important, but it can become harder to maintain as we age. Older adults are also more prone to developing certain oral conditions.



Dry Mouth

Dry mouth in older adults is commonly due to **medications** or **health conditions**. Symptoms include **trouble swallowing**, **cracked lips**, and a **sticky feeling in the mouth**. Treatment options include staying hydrated, avoiding caffeine, or using saliva substitute sprays, rinses, and gum.

Oral Thrush

Oral thrush is a **fungal infection** that causes white patches, soreness, and difficulty swallowing. It can affect those with **weakened immune systems** or who wear **dentures**. Treatment involves antifungal medications, enhanced oral hygiene, and warm saltwater rinses.

Denture Care

If your loved one uses dentures, ensure they are **cleaned daily** and **removed at night** to prevent infections and discomfort. It is best to replace dentures every **five to seven years** if there are no major changes to the mouth.

Impact of Oral Health

Poor oral hygiene can contribute to **heart disease**, **diabetes**, and **respiratory infections**, as bacteria from the mouth can enter the bloodstream. It can also make **chewing** and **swallowing difficult**, limiting food options and impacting nutrition. Help your loved one maintain good oral hygiene to prevent these complications.

Support Oral Health

You can support your loved one's oral health by:

- **Simplifying their routine** with tools like electric toothbrushes, floss holders, and dispensers for toothpaste and fluoride.
- **Coordinating dentist appointments**, providing transportation, or locating mobile dental services.
- Helping them **establish** a consistent, manageable **oral care routine**.