

# Injuries & Safety

## See Something, Say Something

While caring for an adult with a disability, you need to be aware of oral health issues such as:

- Mouth sores or lumps.
- Difficulty chewing.
- Red, swollen or bleeding gums.
- Dark areas or holes in teeth.
- Build-up of plaque on teeth.
- Sores or cracks on gums or in corners of the mouth.
- Red or white spots.
- Loose teeth.
- Broken teeth.
- Mouth odor.
- Dry mouth.



Professional caregivers should report these conditions to a supervisor. Family member caregivers should contact the dental team for help treating oral health issues.

## First Aid for Oral Health Emergencies

If the person you support has an oral health emergency, you should provide first aid and report the incident to a supervisor or medical professional.

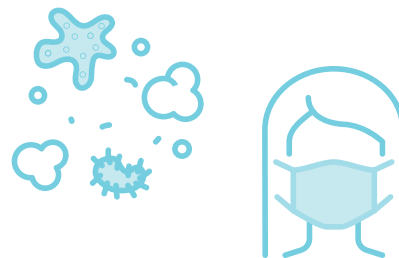


<b>Broken tooth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gently clean dirt, debris or food from the injured area with warm water.</li> <li>• Place a cold compress on the face over the injured area.</li> <li>• Locate and save any broken tooth fragments if possible.</li> <li>• Contact a supervisor or health professional.</li> </ul>
<b>Cut or bitten tongue, lip or cheek</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean area with a clean, wet cloth.</li> <li>• Apply pressure with cloth to stop the bleeding.</li> <li>• Apply ice to the swollen or bruised areas. If bleeding non-stop after 15 minutes, or with pressure, contact a supervisor or health professional.</li> </ul>
<b>Knocked out permanent tooth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find the tooth. Handle by the crown (top) of the tooth, not the root.</li> <li>• Rinse dirt and debris off the tooth with water; do not scrub tooth.</li> <li>• Put the tooth into a cup of fresh milk. Do not put the tooth into tap water.</li> <li>• Contact a supervisor or health professional.</li> </ul>
<b>Toothache or abscess</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rinse the mouth well with warm salt water to remove any food debris.</li> <li>• If the face is swollen, place a cold compress on the outside of the cheek.</li> <li>• Contact a supervisor or health professional.</li> </ul>
<b>Possible broken jaw</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediately call 911.</li> </ul>

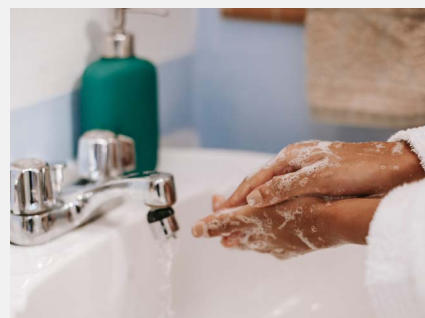
## Dental Safety at Home

### Controlling the Spread of Bacteria

Saliva and blood in the mouth contain bacteria that can spread infection from one person to another. Protect yourself and others with the below tips and by storing personal oral care items in individual, labeled containers.



### Tips for Staying Safe During Daily Mouth Care Sessions



1. You and the person you support should each wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
2. If you are a professional caregiver, put on disposable gloves before touching personal oral care items. You may want to wear protective eyewear and a face mask for additional protection.
3. After completing the mouth care session, place all dental hygiene items back before removing gloves. Learn more about safely storing toothbrushes in Daily Care Basics.
4. Remove used gloves by pinching them at the wrist and turning them inside out. Be careful not to touch the outside surface of the glove.
5. Both you and the person you are helping should wash hands or use hand sanitizer again at the end of the care session.



## Medications

Always review the labels on oral health medications before using them. Write any information about dispensing oral health medications in a person's daily mouth care plan.

If the person you support is not able to spit, use mouth sprays or gels instead of mouthwashes. You can also apply liquid medication directly to teeth using a cotton swab or toothbrush.

If you have questions about the oral health medications for the person you support, talk to your supervisor or the dental team.



# Motivational Interviewing: Injuries & Safety

## Better Conversations, Better Oral Health

Use these motivational interviewing (MI) strategies to talk about oral health with the person you support.



### MI Strategy for the Person You Support

Use open-ended questions to learn more about a person's oral health history.

#### Example:

"Tell me about how you chipped your tooth."



### MI Strategy for Guardian or Family Member

Use open-ended questions to learn more about the person you support from a family member.

#### Example:

"Tell me about the time that [person you support] had a dental emergency. What do you wish you knew back then?"



### Adapting MI Strategies

Remember to use only one question at a time.

## Next Steps

These are additional resources that will help you and the person you support keep thinking about this topic after your conversation is over:

- [First Aid for Oral Health Emergencies Handout](#)
- [Injury & Safety Video](#)

