OK Senior Smiles

Oral Health Care **Educational Toolkit**

OKLAHOMA
State Department
of Health

OK Senior Smiles

Thank you for your interest in oral health care.

By using this resource you are not only impacting the oral health of your residents, but their overall health, as well. It is important to include annual oral care training for your staff and new employees. We have collected useful links for you to use when training your staff about oral health care for nursing home residents and the elderly.

The purpose of OK Senior Smiles is to educate nursing home staff on the importance of daily oral hygiene and the impact oral health has on one's overall health. As the elderly population retaining more of their natural teeth continues to grow at a rapid rate, the importance of oral health needs to be stressed and encouraged. Approximately 1 in 10 cases of pneumonia in nursing home residents is caused by aspirational pneumonia, or the inhalation of bacteria from the mouth. Poor oral health is also connected to heart disease and stroke by contributing to chronic inflammation, causing transient bacteremia and endothelial dysfunction, the non-obstructive coronary artery disease. Additionally, if your residents have diabetes, they may be at increased risk for developing gum disease. Good oral hygiene can help mitigate these risks, as well as improve pain, social interactions, depression and the overall health of nursing home residents. [1]

Please use the following resources to train your staff about oral health care:

OK Senior Smiles Dental Training

A brief course on the continued importance of good oral health during a senior's life, and how direct care staff can encourage and assist their nursing home residents with oral care.

Smiles for Life

This one-hour course addresses the important role direct care staff can play in promoting the oral health needs of older adults. You will learn how to perform a comprehensive oral assessment, identify and manage common geriatric oral conditions and counsel residents on effective preventative measures.

Brushing Up On Mouth Care Manual

Tips and instructions for helping your residents with their oral health care.

Confidence in Every Smile

Resources provided by Pathways to Oral Health: A Project of Oral Health Kansas.

Delta Dental of Oklahoma Foundation Resource Guide

This guide is managed by the Delta Dental of Oklahoma Foundation and updated on a quarterly basis. It lists several options for free or reduced cost dental care and includes a HelpLine to call in case of emergency.

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1. Huh, Y., Yoo, J. E., Park, S., Han, K., Kim, S. M., Park, H. S., Cho, K. H., Ahn, J., Jun, S. H., & Nam, G. E. (2023). Association of Dental Diseases and oral hygiene care with the risk of heart failure in patients with type 2 diabetes: A nationwide cohort study. Journal of the American Heart Association, 12(16). https://doi.org/10.1161/jaha.122.029207