Hygiene 4.1: Oral Hygiene Instructions for Caregivers

Hi there, my name is Dr. Natalie Archer. I'm a dentist practicing here in Toronto, Ontario and I've created a video which is a series of videos for people, people who are taking care of other people, people taking care of other people's teeth, and their oral healthcare, which as we know as a profession that the mouth is the primary portal of one's body, in fact, an alarming statistic is that the number one cause of death in long-term care facilities is acquired pneumonia.

Did you know more than four million people in Canada need the help or care of someone else to take care of their teeth? It's an alarming statistic and what's interesting through the culture, the observations, and my hands-on experience that I've seen is that a number of people taking care of other people such as personal support workers, nurses, family members caregivers don't have the education the tools the training and such the confidence to take care of one another's teeth properly or with best practices.

One of the things that I have learnt within the last probably year or so is my appreciation for the nursing profession. They are our hands-on, frontline workers every day and I cannot express how much I commend their efforts and one of the things that we do on an annual basis is at Runnymede dental centers we do a teaching hands-on module for nursing week. one of the questions that I usually ask the nurses is during their curriculum program how much oral hygiene training they received, and the hands are sparse and few and I've done some investigation and research to find out that for the most part from what I can see is that there's usually a one-day or half a day program in terms of the oral hygiene instruction. Those young nurses are now into nursing homes, retirement homes, complex care hospitals and the typical patient that they see on average day is not like themselves and so, you can imagine what happens is you create a culture of unknown, you create a culture of uncertainty and so part of the purpose in our videos today is to actually bring some patience from our current hospital that are more depictive of what your average patient is.

Here in my dental clinic, I have all kinds of fancy lights, tools, water, and assistant to do my job with ease, for the most part. But the nursing profession you're up there you've got very little time you have to find the tools around you, and you have to be able to do that job in a very quick, comfortable manner. I'm thrilled to bring you some series of videos some tips some tricks just to make it easy to give you that confidence and so that we can really increase our oral hygiene awareness, our education levels, and really change the culture here in Ontario, enjoy.

I'd like to speak briefly about a video for dentures or removable prosthesis: teeth that come outside of the mouth, so very high level. It is very important for the dentures to come out at night. Whether they're a partial denture or a complete upper or lower denture it's extremely important for the tissues to rest at night it's extremely important for the dentures when they're outside of the mouth to be kept in a very safe place so that they're not susceptible to falling on the floor or breaking. Also, in a solution that is either water or something very clean. absolutely under no circumstances should you put them into bleach, hydrogen peroxide, in the microwave, in the dishwasher, or anything else. I know you're laughing at this point, but this is a common conversation I have every month with people and so I'd like to get it out there on what is best practices. We will be showing you how to take dentures in and out and obviously, any patient who has dentures should be seen regularly at least annually by a dentist for an oral care cancer inspection making sure there's no soreness, pain, lesions etc. in the mouth and I look forward to empowering you how to how do you take care of someone’s dentures.

So, I want to thank Boogleloop for participating in this video. one of the nice things is uh or challenges that sometimes we see is Boogleloop speaks Croatian, I speak English, you don't speak much English and I don't speak any Croatian, so this is one of the things sometimes we see is language barriers so but it's very important that we're able to take care of Boogleloop’s teeth.

Boogleloop has removable dentures, and I’m just going to get you to open. Boogleloop has a partial denture, and I can tell because he has a little metal clasp that I’m going to use my finger ever so lightly just to lift and just very safely remove and have my hand over top so that we don't want to drop the denture. I’m just going to put that on my tray and with the top again and close a little and I just sort of close a little bit just to get the suction or seal just to get it off like so. Again, I'm always taking it out and holding it with my hand underneath to make sure that we don't drop it. You can relax, good. Another trick you can do is ask a patient to blow their cheeks up like so and it breaks the seal as well.

I love how this denture is labeled with his name on it and especially in hospitals or in long-term care facilities when patients frequently move in various different rooms floors etc., things and belongings can get missed or misplaced and I'm sure it's very difficult for people to ascertain whose removable prosthesis when there's a room of people with the same sort of situation.

If we were to finish cleaning the dentures just gone to the sink just with water and a denture brush and I really scrubbed the teeth surfaces on the outside, around where the clasp is and then if you flip a denture over there's always plaque and bacteria all the way inside on the inside of it. So, when we're putting it back into somebody's mouth it's nice and clean. Now, the trick is if you're using gloves like I did you can see how wet my gloves are and they're very slippery, so you just want to make sure are that again I'm using my hand making sure I don't want to drop Boogleloop denture, or he would not be very happy with me.

In terms of taking dentures out at night, we want to make sure that we're putting them in a very clean, changing solution. I just happen to have a sample of Polydent that our patients use we give them samples to keep the dentures in in a basin. If you don't have it not to worry about it, you can just simply put straight up water. Putting the dentures back in again I would take the lower and just very gently pull the cheek a little bit apart put it back in rest it using my fingers underneath making sure and it's comfortable. The same thing with the top, again, I pull the cheek out a little bit just to get the space put it back in make sure my fingers are out of the way and we're back where we started from.

Thank you so much, thank you so much.

I'd like to speak just very briefly high-level about tooth brushing the importance and probably trying to come up with some best practice advice tooth brushing should be done twice a day ideally in the morning, after breakfast, before you go to work or school, or before one starts their day, and the most important time from a dental perspective is definitely before bed. Why? because our salivary flow rate is our lowest at the night so you can imagine without a lot of saliva flowing through the mouth everything sticks to the teeth, so, brushing our teeth before bed is extremely important. Having a toothbrush that has changed regularly, ideally every three to four months, where the bristles are intact, soft, and kept in a clean place is important, and using the smallest amount of toothpaste imaginable a pea or smaller is ideal. If the patient has swallowing impairments or difficulties with digestive even no fluoride toothpaste or no toothpaste at all should be used.

So, I'd like to introduce Barbara and want to thank Barbara for helping us participate in an oral hygiene instruction. Barbara has an interesting condition where she can't have a lot of fluids, correct? So can't drink waters or different things like that. So, a couple things for somebody like Barbara and if I was a nurse, personal support worker, caregiver, family member and one of the first things that's very important is to make sure, you have all of your tools and props ready to go. So, I would have Barbara sitting up as she is, I would let her know that we're about to brush her teeth, we do the circular motion just to show that that's what we're going to be doing, and then having the obvious things ready the toothbrush, a little bit of toothpaste, if we were using toothpaste with Barbara, two cups: one with a little bit of water, and one just on the side that's empty, just in case she needs to expectorate or spit at any time. Two of the things that I always suggest for people to make it comfortable for themselves is to have safety glasses, so they feel comfortable so, something along that line and just like you're wearing your safety glasses and a mask, if they also feel, just to protect them as well and to make sure we're not coughing in Barbara's mouth.

For the purposes of this video, I won't use those tools but because Barbara can't have any fluids, we would be using our specialized toothbrush or a regular toothbrush if that's what you have, and we would be dipping them in water. So, I'm going to start with my favourite toothbrush, which is the surround toothbrush actually matches your outfit quite lovely, and I would just dip it in the water to make sure that we have it nicely there. I would be putting on my gloves if Barbara had just had a meal or there was excessive food etc. in the mouth having some gauze, or some tissue available and I would take the toothbrush wonderful she already knows, and I always love starting on the opposite side of where I am in terms of brushing the teeth there. You can take your time, a couple not to rush things, and also make sure that you're you know letting the patient know what we're doing, etc. and we want to make sure as well that we protect your outfit so I sometimes have paper towel is well ready in case she needs to needs to spit or go or wet wipe anything off and that kind of thing, same thing with the top, we're using our specialized toothbrush just open for me Barbara perfect and it's really easy I mean patients love their teeth being brushed it's clean and fresh and I want to empower people, family members, visiting, etc. nurses, caregivers etc. being anybody can easily be able to clean one another's mouth. I want to thank you, Barbara.

The following video is a specialized video specialized in the sense that I want to talk about certain types of patients that present unique, medically compromised situations, whether they have a g-tube, whether they present with mental issues, dexterity issues, whatever the medical issues are that allow these patients to get more build up, more plaque, more calculus, and also what's challenging is being able to get into their mouths is also challenging, and these are the especially the types of patients that I want to empower you, the people who are taking care of one another's teeth, to give you some tips and tricks and tools to make it easier. Two of the specialized products we use within our dental clinic do just that one is a specialized mouth prop, and one is a specialized toothbrush, by using one or both of those products make it really easy, effective, and safe for you and the patient to do what you need to do in terms of increasing their oral hygiene.

So, today we're at the Runnemede dental center with Bill. Bill and I have been together for two years and today's purpose just a very short synopsis if I was a nurse, if I was a personal support worker, if I was a family member, or caregiver, what are some of the tips and tricks, we would do up on the floor to care for Bill's teeth. I love to use gloves these ones are bubble gum flavoured in the dental clinic, if they're not so good tasting you can always ask people just to rinse or wash the gloves just take the vinyl, or the latex flavour away, and they can also wear safety glasses. I won't be for the video but something along that line. Normally in the dental office I would be wearing a mask but for the purposes of this video you may not be able to hear me as well and so I won't. So, bill has in your hand if I may, our friend, the handy dandy toothbrush, which most patients would have and normally with any patient we normally do, Bill is right on his game, but we usually tend to just rub the cheek in a very circular fashion just to signal that we're about to do tooth brushing or cleaning one another's teeth. We do that in a dental center, we do that at Runnymede for all our patients, we try and teach our nurses to do that, we try and teach all the caregivers and family members that in all of our literature, so that we're all consistently doing the same kind of symbol. I personally would get Bill to open and with a regular toothbrush, I would be brushing the grinding surfaces, I would be going on the outside surfaces, and Bill's just such a treat, and on the inside surfaces. Bill is just fantastic to do that I usually have all my tools ready, so if he needed to spit or expectorate, we have a cup there also I like to have a half a cup of water just ready in case he wants to rinse before if it's just been lunchtime anything along that line in terms of toothpaste that we use Bill has a g-tube, so swallowing is an issue. For patients like Bill, we will not recommend fluoride toothpaste or toothpaste in general, but if we were to use just a tiny little bit, we would be just using you can kind of see not even a pea-sized but it's just extremely, extremely small you can hardly see it. So, we would put that on and again, in terms of opening the mouth like so, I would just put my finger like so, just to get in on the top surfaces brushing surfaces etc.

Now Bill has been a patient at our clinic for two years and so he's been privy to some pretty handy, dandy tricks we have to make it really easy. So, for example, if bill was not feeling so great having a difficult day, I love these mouth props they are patented mouth prop called the open wide grip and they're spongy they're antibacterial and let's see here bite together for me Bill, good and this is a way some nurses are afraid of the patient biting them or closing down on them inadvertently, so it allows me to brush the surfaces this way, take it one step further and I would use this very specialized toothbrush called the surround toothbrush because the bristles are on a 45-degree angle and allow me with one simple movement to brush just the grinding surfaces, but imagine, it gets the outside surface of the teeth and the inside surface of the teeth just by the fancy, dancy creation of the bristles there.

If we're not having my specialized tools, here, we provide a website in which the institution, family, anybody can purchase or get those. We also offer them here at our dental clinic so feel free to ask us for them. We're happy to supply them to our patients and then most importantly if you're having just your average tools which is your regular toothbrush, cup of water, and an extra cup there it just makes it have everything ready there just makes it really easy.

Twice a day, once in the morning, once night before bedtime. Thank you so much, Bill