



# CAREGIVER RENEWAL INSTITUTE

**Empowering Caregivers. Renewing Hope.**

**A clean mouth provides several benefits;** helping to prevent sores and possibly improving appetite. It also can help with the uncomfortable condition of dry mouth, which can be caused by mouth breathing, oxygen therapy, infrequent mouth care, a side effect of medications or a complication of radiation therapy.

**If your loved one is able to do mouth care, assist him or her to do so.**

## WHAT TO DO:

- Raise the head of the bed and place a clean cloth under the chin.
- Remove any dentures and place them in a container of water.
- Sip water to moisten mouth.
- Apply toothpaste to the brush and gently brush teeth, gums and tongue.
- Allow to sip water and spit alternately.
- Finish with cool water and/or alcohol-free mouthwash as desired.
- If dentures were removed, brush them with toothpaste or clean them with denture cleanser before replacing them in a clean mouth.
- Leave poor-fitting dentures out of the mouth to prevent mouth sores.
- Pat lips with a clean cloth and apply non-petroleum lip balm to prevent dryness. Reapply lip balm frequently during the day.

**Toothettes may be easier to use than a toothbrush.**

## MOUTH CARE USING TOOTHETTES OR MOUTH SWABS:

- Insert swab into side cheek
- Swab cheek and swab across upper gum
- Swab inside other cheek and lower gum
- Swab upper palette and tongue off if tolerated

## CALL YOUR MEDICAL TEAM IF:

- Your loved one develops a sore throat or mouth sores.
- White patches are noted on the tongue, gum line or roof of mouth.

**Remember, the Caregiver Renewal Institute is here to support you. Call your CRI team if you have any questions or concerns at (850) 353-0280.**