

assist you to clean your dentures if necessary.

### **My mouth feels dry. Why is this?**

A dry mouth has many causes including:

- Dehydration
- Being nil by mouth
- Using an oxygen mask
- Breathing through your mouth
- Taking certain medicines
- Chemotherapy

If your mouth feels dry please tell us as soon as you can. Try to ensure you are drinking lots of fluids (unless you have been advised not to). We can apply gels and creams to your mouth and lips to make them feel more comfortable.

### **My mouth is painful, what should I do?**

Please let us know as soon as possible if your mouth feels painful or uncomfortable. We will investigate this and can arrange for a doctor or dentist to review you if necessary.

Please remember that we are here to assist you. If you should have any

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questions or require further information please let us know.

Mouth Care Matters is an initiative by NHS Health Education England (HEE) that aims to improve oral health during your hospital stay and for people in care. Great Western Hospital is part of an exciting new pilot which will eventually be rolled out across the rest of the United Kingdom. We would greatly appreciate any feedback you have regarding your experiences of mouth care whilst you are with us. Please give any feedback to us during your stay or email [m.buyanga@nhs.net](mailto:m.buyanga@nhs.net)

**This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email [gwh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:gwh.pals@nhs.net)**

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**{ Mouth Care Matters**

A Guide to Maintaining Good Oral Health during your stay in Hospital.



## Mouth Care Matters

### **Why is good oral health important?**

Good oral health brings benefits to us all. Having a healthy and comfortable mouth allows us to enjoy eating and drinking, socialising and brings great benefits to our overall health. A decline in oral health can lead to infection and a longer hospital stay. It is therefore important to maintain a good standard of oral health during your time with us.

We are here to help you achieve this.

### **How is good oral health achieved?**

It is important to brush teeth twice per day using a fluoride toothpaste. This removes plaque and food debris and ensures a clean mouth. Ideally good oral health is helped by cleaning in-between the teeth with floss or interdental brushes. However, we understand that this may not always be achievable in a hospital setting.

### **What can I do to help?**

If you are attending for an elective procedure, please ensure that you bring your oral hygiene aids with you. This should include a toothbrush, toothpaste and any floss/brushes you may use at home to clean in-between your teeth. Please store these in a named washbag. You may find it easier to bring a manual toothbrush for your stay as it can be difficult to charge an electric toothbrush. If you wear dentures, please bring your denture storage pot, cleaning solution and any adhesives you use. Mark it clearly with your name. Staff can provide sticky labels with your details if needed

### **What if I forget to bring my toothbrush or toothpaste?**

If you can, ask a friend or relative to bring these in for you. If this is not possible, we can provide you with a toothbrush and toothpaste. Please ask us as soon as you can. These items can also be purchased from the Boots pharmacy and the shop in the atrium next to Costa coffee.

### **Will you help me if I am unable to care for my own mouth?**

Yes, if you are unable to care for your own oral health, we will assist you. If you are with us for longer than 24 hours we will perform a gentle and thorough assessment of your mouth. This enables us to formulate an oral care plan most appropriate to your needs. We do this assessment by using a light to carefully look around your mouth.

### **I wear dentures. What will happen to them?**

It is important to wear your dentures as normal whilst you are with us. When you are not wearing them please ensure you store them safely. Dentures should not be wrapped in bed linen or tissues as they may get lost. We can provide you with a lidded pot to store them if you haven't brought your own. We will