

DENTAL HEALTH *FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA*

Many people with dementia cannot tell us about their discomfort or pain. It is up to whānau and carers to understand changes that may mean there are problems. These could be not eating, pulling at the face, refusing tooth brushing and/or other mouth care, refusing to wear dentures or other behaviours. It is important to remember that the mouth is a very personal space and kindness and good communication is needed to provide oral care. Every person with dementia needs a plan for the care of their mouth and teeth.

Common dental problems

- Saliva is important to keep the mouth healthy and to prevent tooth decay.
- Some medicines lead to a dry mouth.
- Some medicines are sugar based and can lead to tooth decay.
- Eating patterns can change – frequent small sugary snacks, sucking boiled lollies or drinking sugared tea can lead to tooth decay.
- Over time, it can get harder to brush teeth or look after false teeth.
- People can forget to carry out routine oral care.

Key tips for dental care

- Use fluoride toothpaste on natural teeth every day and preferably twice daily.
- Help with tooth brushing, flossing and looking after false teeth.
- Have a consistent routine for oral health care.
- Eat less sugar between meals.
- Visit a dentist regularly if possible.

Dry mouth

People with dementia often suffer from a dry mouth.

- Help the person to drink plenty of water, or spray water gently into the mouth using a spray bottle. Artificial saliva products are also available.
- Some medications and products are available that may help. Talk to the doctor and dentist about these.



Visits to the dentist

- Regular check-ups are advised when and where possible.
- A thorough dental check should be done in the early stages of dementia where possible, and a long term flexible and simple preventive dental treatment plan developed.
- Before a dental visit, talk to the dentist or staff about the things that might make the visit easier. This could be reducing noise or the number of people around, sorting out transport issues, sedation or pre-medication needs and the timing of the visit.
- A whānau member or carer should be with the person during the visit to help.
- If eligible for public-funded care, contact the hospital closest to you to see if they have staff who specialise in the treatment of people with dementia.
- Tell dental professionals that they can contact their local Alzheimers organisation if they wish to discuss any issues or problems, as can whānau members and carers.

CARE OF NATURAL TEETH

Using fluoride and antimicrobials

- Use fluoride toothpaste every day, preferably twice a day for two minutes each time.
- Use a high-fluoride toothpaste if the local water supply is non-fluoridated and if the person has a high risk of dental decay-a dentist will be able to carry out a caries risk assessment.
- Using fluoride and antimicrobial mouth rinses or gels.
- Use once a week-you can get these from the chemist or the local supermarket.
- Put into a small spray bottle to gently spray onto teeth.
- Don't use fluorides and antimicrobials together – use one in the morning and the other at night.
- Talk to your dental professional about using these mouth rinses or gels.

Brushing teeth

- Use a small headed soft toothbrush.
- Store in a rack or uncovered container and rinse after use.
- Electric toothbrushes can be helpful- use the softest head available.
- Some people find it easier to copy another person who is cleaning their teeth.
- If brushing another person's teeth, first explain what you are about to do. It is important to clean the back teeth, front teeth and the tongue also.
- When tooth brushing, removing false teeth or if able to floss another person's teeth, it may be easier to seat the person and stand in front or beside or behind – experiment to find what suits you and the person with dementia.

Sugar

- If sugar needs to be cut down artificial sweeteners may be appropriate-check this with the doctor.
- Use sugar-free snacks and drink water or drinks with reduced or no sugar.

DENTURE CARE (looking after false teeth)

- Rinse dentures after every meal and brush them using a toothbrush or denture brush.
- Place a clean soft cloth or a clean paper towel in the sink and fill it with a small amount of water when cleaning the dentures so that they will not crack if dropped.
- Dentures should be removed overnight and soaked in water. Cleaning tablets can be used but are not necessary. Physical cleaning is the key. They can also be cleaned professionally from time to time.
- A clinical dental technician or a dentist are able to assess dentures and replace them as necessary, they are also able to label dentures.
- Partial denture clasps can damage the mouth and tongue if caught and can be more difficult to remove than full dentures.
- In later stages of dementia, it may not be possible to wear dentures. Swab the mouth gently with water as well as you are able.



This information sheet has been developed as a resource for participants in the research project "Māori Oral Health Research Priorities" by the Eru Pōmare Māori Health Research Centre/Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare, University of Otago, Wellington. The research was funded by the Ministry of Health and the Health Research Council of New Zealand. Alzheimers New Zealand offers support, information, and education. For further information visit www.alzheimers.org.nz or contact your local Alzheimers New Zealand organisation. This information sheet is based on information provided by Alzheimer's Australia Dental Care Information sheet available at <http://www.alzheimers.org.au/content.cfm?infopageid=4416>, Vivien Quinn, previously a Dental Therapist and Dr Pauline Koopu, Public Health Dental Specialist.

TE HAUORA A-NIHO

TE HUNGA MATE PŌREWAREWA

Kāore e taea e te maha o ngā tāngata mate pōrewarewa te whakaatu i tō rātau auhi, mamae rānei. Ko te tikanga me mārama te whānau me ngā kaitiaki ki ngā āhuatanga e tohu ai kei te raruraru. Arā, ko te kore kai, te kukume i te kanohi, te whakakāhore i te parāhe niho me ētahi atu mea horoi waha, te whakakāhore i te mau niho kēhua, ētahi atu whanonga rānei. Me mātua maumahara he wāhanga tino whaiaro te waha, ā, e hiahiatia ana te ngākau atawhai me te āta kōrerorero hei āta tiaki i te waha. E hiahia ana ia tangata mate pōrewarewa i tētahi mahere hei tiaki i tōna waha me ōna niho.

Ngā raruraru hauora-ā-niho e kitea ana

- He mea nui te ware kia hauora ai te waha me te ārai i te pirau o te niho.
- Ka maroke te waha i ētahi rongoā.
- Ka rerekē te āhua o ngā kai – ka pirau ngā niho i te kai i ngā paramanawa whai huka auau, te ngote i ngā rare kōhua, te inu tī me te huka rānei.
- Ka roa te wā, ka uaua ake te parāhe niho, te tiaki rānei i ngā niho kēhua.
- Ka wareware anō i ētahi te tiaki auau i ō rātau niho.

Ngā kupu ako mō te tiaki niho

- Me whakamahi te pēniho pūkōwhai ki ō niho ia rā, ā, ko te mea pai kia rua ngā wā i te rā.
- Me āwhina ki te parāhe niho, te tuaina me te tiaki i ngā niho kēhua.
- Kia ōrite te mahi tiaki niho.
- Kia iti ake te kai huka i waenga kai.
- Me auau te kite i tētahi tākuta niho mēnā ka taea.

Waha maroke

- Ka maroke te waha o te tangata mate pōrewarewa.
- Me āwhina i a ia ki te inu wai, te āta tōrehu wai ki roto i te waha mā tētahi pātara tōrehu. E wātea anō ngā hua ware waihanga.
- E wātea anō ētahi rongoā me ngā hua hei āwhina. Me kōrero ki te tākuta, te tākuta niho rānei mō ēnei.

Ngā toro ki te tākuta niho

- E tūtohuhia ngā tirohanga auau ina taea ana.
- Me haere kia āta titirohia ngā niho i te pānga mai o te mate pōrewarewa ina taea ana, ā, me te waihanga i tētahi mahere tiaki niho taupā ngawari me te wā roa.
- I mua i tētahi toronga tākuta niho, me kōrero ki te tākuta niho, kaimahi rānei mō ngā mea hei whakamāmā i te toronga. Tērā pea ko te whakaiti i te hoihoi, te maha o ngā tāngata rānei, te whakarite i te waka, te whakarokiroki, ngā hiahia rongoā-tōmua rānei, me te wā o te toronga.
- Me whai wāhi tētahi o te whānau, tētahi kaitiaki rānei ki te taha o taua tangata i te wā o te toronga.
- Mēnā e whai wāhi ki ngā maimoatanga whaiutu-tūmatanui, me whakapā atu ki te hōhipera tūtata ki a koe ki te kite mēnā e whai kaimahi e matatau ana ki te whāwhā i te hunga pōrewarewa.
- Me kōrero atu ki ngā ngaio ā-niho mēnā ka taea e rātau te whakapā atu ki te Alzheimers Organisation tūtata mēnā e hiahia rātau ki te kōrero mō ētahi take, raruraru rānei, ā, ka taea anō te whānau, ngā kaitiaki hoki te whakapā atu anō.



TE TIAKI I NGA NIHO TUTURU

Te whakamahi pūkōwhai me ngā antimicrobials

- Me whakamahi ngā pēniho pūkōwhai ia rā, kia rua ngā wā i te rā mō te rua mineti te mea pai.
- Me whakamahi ko te pēniho pūkōwhai-nui mēnā kāore he pūkōwhai i roto i te wai, ā, ka mutu mēnā e nui te mōrearea o te tangata ki te pirau niho – ka taea e te tākuta niho te whakahaere i tētahi aromatawai mōrearea.
- Me whakamahi ngā wai horoi waha, pia antimicrobial rānei.
- Ka whakamahi kia kotahi te wā i te wiki – ka taea ēnei te tiki i te toa rongoā, te hokomaha rānei.
- Raua atu ki tētahi pātara tōrehu iti hei tōrehu ki ngā niho.
- Kaua e whakamahi tahi i ngā pūkōwhai me ngā antimicrobial – whakamahia tētahi i te ata me tētahi atu i te pō.
- Me kōrero ki tō ngaio niho mō te whakamahi i ngā wai horoi waha, pia rānei.

Te parāhe niho

- Whakamahia tētahi parāhe niho paku te mähunga, ngohengohe hoki.
- Waiho ki tētahi whatanga, ki tētahi oko taupoki kore me te horoi i muri i te whakamahitanga.
- He pai ngā parāhe niho hiko – whakamahia te mahunga ngohengohe rawa.
- Ka māmā ki ētahi te whai i tētahi tangata kei te horoi i ōna niho.
- Mēnā kei te parāhe i ngā niho o tētahi, me whakamārama atu kei te aha koe. He mea nui tonu ki te horoi i ngā niho o muri, o mua me te arero hoki.
- Ina parāhe niho ana, te tango niho kēhua, te tuaina i ngā niho o tētahi rānei, he māmā ake pea te whakanoho i te tangata me te tū ki mua, ki te taha, ki muri rānei – me whakamātau kia tika ai ki tā kōrua ko te tangata pōrewarewa.

Huka

- Mēnā e hiahia ana kia whakaitia te kai huka, tērā pea he pai ngā āwenewene – me pātai ki te tākuta.
- Whakamahia ngā paramanawa kore huka, me ngā inu wai, ngā inu rānei he iti te huka, kāore rānei he huka.

HAUORA-Ā-NIHO (te tiaki niho kēhua)

- Me opeope ngā niho kēhua i muri i ia kai me te parāhe mā te parāhe niho, parāhe niho kēhua rānei.
- Raua he papanga ngohengohe ngāwari mā, he taora pepa mā rānei ki roto i te pūoto ka whakakī ki te wai iti ina horoi koe i ō niho kēhua kia kore ai e whati ki te taka i a koe.
- Ko te tikanga me tango ngā niho kēhua i te pō ka rūmakina ki te wai. He pai ngā pire whakamā engari ehara i te mea me tino āhei. Ko te āta horoi ā-ringa te mea nui. Ka taea anō te heri mā ngā ngaio anō e horoi i ētahi wā.
- Ka taea e tētahi kaitoi niho, tākuta niho rānei te arotake i ō niho kēhua me te whakakapi mēnā e tika ana, ka taea anō e rātau te whakapiri ingoa ki ngā niho kēhua.
- Ka taea e ngā wāhanga niho kēhua te tūkinu i te waha me te arero mēnā ka mau ana, ā, ka uaua ake anō te tango tēnā i ngā niho kēhua tūturu.
- Ka roa ana te mate pōrewarewa, kāore pea e āhei te mau niho kēhua. Me āta ūkui te waha ki te wai ina taea e koe.

He mea waihanga tēnei pepa pārongo hei rauemi mō ngā tāngata o te kaupapa rangahau “Māori Oral Health Research Priorities”, nā Te Rōpū Rangahau a Eru Pōmare, Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo ki Te Whanga-Nui-a-Tara. Nā te Manatū Hauora me Te Kaunihera Rangahau Hauora o Aotearoa te pūtea.

E whakarato tautoko, pārongo me te mātauranga a Alzheimers New Zealand. Mō ētahi atu pārongo tirohia a www.alzheimers.org.nz, whakapā atu rānei ki tō Alzheimers New Zealand tūtata. Ko te pūtake o tēnei Pepa Āwhina nā ngā pārongo a te pepa pārongo a Alzheimer’s Australia Dental Care e wātea ana i <http://www.alzheimers.org.au/content.cfm?infopageid=4416>, Vivien Quinn, Haumanu Niho i ngā wā o mua, rāua ko Dr Pauline Koopu, Tākuta Niho Hauora Tūmatanui.

This information sheet provides a general summary only of the subject matter covered and is not a substitute for informed professional advice.

Any person with dementia or a carer for a person with dementia should seek professional advice about any individual case. Alzheimers New Zealand Incorporated and/or its officers or employees shall not be liable for any error or omission in this publication, as a result of negligence or otherwise.

Alzheimers New Zealand has a range of information sheets and booklets available for people with dementia, their carers and families.

Contact your local organisation for information and support on freephone 0800 004 001 and for more resources go to www.alzheimers.org.nz/resources

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