

Are you learning to have fun and success taking care of your disabled relatives' (and the caregivers') teeth?

Much of the following is not medical advice. The following opinions are only personal opinions. Please check with your dentist(s) and doctor(s) before following personal opinions.

For sons and daughters of any age and with a disability, it is necessary to maintain excellent dental hygiene. Sons and daughters with autism may not choose to sit while having cavities drilled, filled, and having time to dry. Of course, it is best not to need sleeping anesthesia due to cavities; that's one reason to prevent cavities.

1) Step 1: For sons and daughters with an oral care disability, brushing and flossing teeth helps prevent plaque/calculus/tartar, it would be great for parents to brush and floss their teeth while showing love, happiness, smiling, patience, singing, kindness, and respect.

2) Step 2: For sons and daughters who are unable to spit (or whose doctor or dentist has diagnosed a child via a lab test that the child is allergic to fluoride), purchase a deliciously flavored and fluoride-free toothpaste. a) Ensure that teeth are brushed enough times per day. (Brushing only once per day is *not* okay – it's not enough.) b) Brush long enough each time. c) Know that in the beginning, the parent and child may have an easier time standing up, if possible. d) Eventually - very soon - all teeth need to be brushed each time per day.

So, especially, make it an enjoyable experience together.

A pediatric dentist invented this toothpaste below. This is a very delicious toothpaste and doesn't need to be spit out:

[Dr. Branam's Natural Xylitol Toothpaste For Kids](#)

Yum Yum Bubblegum is truly delicious! It comes in paste and gel. And Go Go Grape gel tastes good too.

<https://www.drbranamsxylitol.com/xylitol-toothpaste-facts.html>

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006FCRX8Y/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_image?ie=UTF8&psc=1

This other particular brand is also available in many flavors:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00D8W53O0/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_image?ie=UTF8&psc=1

Remember to ask your dentist's office how many times per day to brush teeth.

Here is the opinion from a very kind dentist who has been a pediatric dentist for many, many years:

Dr. Stephen Branam, DDS, pediatric dentist, wanted to share this information:

“This information will benefit both patients with autism, their caregivers, and mainstream people.... There are multiple opinions about how and how often a person should brush their teeth. People need accurate information so they can do what is best for themselves. Ideally, you need to brush your teeth twice a day: in the morning after breakfast and the last thing you do at night before going to bed. Bedtime brushing is the most important because the teeth will be ‘CLEAN’ the whole time you are sleeping.”

The dentist continued: “The toothpaste you use is even more critical than the toothbrush. Even though fluoride toothpaste hardens the tooth enamel to resist the effects of the bacteria on the tooth's surface, it does not lower the bacteria on the tooth, tongue, or gums. The very best toothpaste is one formulated with at least 30% XYLITOL by volume. *Xylitol lowers the level of disease-causing bacteria of the entire mouth. Obviously, the use of a xylitol toothpaste is 3 times better than using a fluoride toothpaste alone.*”

Dr. Branam’s Natural Xylitol Toothpaste and Gel have been clinically tested in a hospital-based study and proven to be safe and very effective for the entire family. You can see the products and the clinical study at www.drbranamsxylitol.com These products are safe to swallow, and they are actually meant to be left in your mouth after brushing.

Additional information on the internet about certain foods:

The internet informs people that, for example, blueberries can stain teeth. It emphasized that it’s important to brush immediately after foods that can stain. (It may also be a good idea to check if any type of sublingual supplement can stain teeth.)

3) Step 3: Get a soft manual toothbrush that reaches each side of each tooth and the top of each tooth. a) Brush back and forth over the tops. b) Lean to the cheek side and brush. c) Lean to the tongue side and brush.

[Collis-Curve Youth Toothbrush with Triplefit bristles - Collis Curve Toothbrush](#)

[Collis-Curve Soft Toothbrush with Triplefit Bristles - Collis Curve Toothbrush](#)

Remember to ask your dentist's office how many times per day about brushing teeth.

4) Step 4: Also, get an item like Philips Sonic to use daily.

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00YAR7ZL6/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_image?ie=UTF8&psc=1

Philips Sonicare for Kids 3+ Bluetooth Connected Rechargeable Electric Power Toothbrush

On the internet, such as a PDF on Google or a video on YouTube, you can find instructions of how to use Philips Sonicare 3000 Series and 4000 Series from 2015 (<https://www.documents.philips.com/assets/20230828/14030664e3ee4fb59742b06c0124bd28.pdf>). It is not the same as manual toothbrush. Here are some examples of instructions from the Philips.com link above, and you can look this up on the internet:

“Brushing instructions

“1 Wet the bristles and apply a small amount of toothpaste.

“2 Place the toothbrush bristles against the teeth at a slight angle (45 degrees), pressing gently to make the bristles reach the gumline or slightly beneath the gumline. Note: Keep the center of the brush in contact with the teeth at all times.

“3 Press the power on/off button to turn on the Philips Sonicare.

“4 Gently keep the bristles placed on the teeth and in the gumline. Brush your teeth with small back and forth motion so the bristles reach between the teeth. Continue this motion throughout your brushing cycle. Note: The bristles should slightly flare. It is not recommended to scrub as you would with a manual toothbrush.

“5 To clean the inside surfaces of the front teeth, tilt the brush handle semi-upright and make several vertical overlapping brushing strokes on each tooth. Note: To make sure you brush evenly throughout the mouth, divide your mouth into 4 sections using the QuadPacer feature (see chapter ‘Features’). Begin brushing in section 1 (outside upper teeth) and brush for 30 seconds before you move to section 2 (inside upper teeth). Continue brushing in section 3 (outside lower teeth) and brush for 30 seconds before you move to section 4 (inside lower teeth).”

Look up the remainder of the instructions for Philips Sonicare on the internet, and consider watching instructions on YouTube.

Also, here is an example of a different electric toothbrush available at a grocery store:
Spinbrush:(R) Kid's Paw Patrol(TM) Battery-Powered Toothbrush

With regard to using an electric toothbrush, such as from Philips Sonicare or the Spinbrush toothbrush, hold the brush at a 45 degree angle – only small pressure - and hold the electric toothbrush on each tooth for 3-to-5 seconds.

Dr. Branam continued with the pediatric dentist’s opinion: “I recommend using a manual toothbrush versus an electric toothbrush. You want to cleanse (brush) your *entire mouth including your gums and tongue*. An electric toothbrush primarily brush or polish the teeth

alone. Misuse or aggressive use of an electric toothbrush can sometimes irritate the gumline and push bacteria underneath the gumline. When using a manual toothbrush, use a circular motion and brush both the teeth and gums. Every time you brush your teeth, *be sure to brush your tongue*. Tooth decay and gum infection are diseases caused by bacteria. These bacteria live on your teeth, gums, and tongue. Polishing your teeth will only decrease one-third of the bacteria in your mouth. If you want to use an electric toothbrush, *follow it up by finishing with a manual toothbrush.*”

5) Step 5. Here is an additional good item, but carefully use this not to cut or irritate the gum:

Examples:

GUM End Tuft Toothbrush - Extra Small Head For Hard-to-Reach Areas - Implants, Back Teeth, and Wisdom Teeth - Soft Dental Brush for Adults

TEPE Angled Soft Bristle Toothbrush, Orthodontic Toothbrush for Braces, Small Head Toothbrush for Retainers, Implants, Universal Care

Remember to ask your dentist's office about use and / or frequency.

6) Step 6: Floss every day. The flosser that reaches the back teeth may be better for the back teeth but ensure doing it gently and not rushing; be careful not to cut the gum. The shorter flosser is better for the front teeth but be careful with the pointed flosser piece.

Examples:

a) *Listerine Ultraclean Access Flosser* in hard to reach places

b) *Oral-B eco Sustainable Dental Floss Picks - Mint* - they are shorter for front teeth

c) *Kroger Hi-Performance Fine Flosser* - they are shorter for front teeth

d) *Individually Wrapped Dental Floss Picks - Biodegradable Plastic Free Flosser Handle & Packaging | Natural Toothpick Stick Soft On Gums & Teeth | Eco Friendly, Zero Waste, Organic Flossers*

Remember to ask your dentist's office how many times per day about flossing teeth.

7) Step 7: For another time(s) of day, a dental irrigation syringe with a curved tip can be used to clean between the teeth toward the gums. It's also necessary after wisdom teeth are pulled. And, in general, many people use a Waterpik. If a child with autism doesn't like the Waterpik, then the dental irrigation syringe with a curved tip can likely more easily be used. That can also be convenient for use on an airline flight. A West Coast pediatric dentist had recommended use of an irrigation syringe or a Waterpik. But be careful with the tip to ensure you do not cut gums. And, again, if it is after the wisdom teeth are pulled, salt can be added to the dental irrigation syringe with water; please ask the dentist's office.

Here is a different opinion from a different dentist about whether to use this: “Oral irrigating devices are by far the least effective way to clean your teeth. They may irritate the gums and ‘force’ the bacteria into and below the gumline.”

Although the California pediatric dentist allowed the dental irrigation curved syringe for individuals below 40 years old, the East Coast pediatric dentist’s opinion added: “They are recommended by most dentists to be used for older adults (40 years of age and older), definitely not to be routinely used for children and teens.”

8) Step 8: Additional information: The East Coast dentist indicated that mouthwash and mouth rinses “are only effective on ‘clean teeth,’ and should be used after a good or thorough brushing. I completely understand that this type of brushing may not always be possible for people with autism or special needs.”

However, since many special needs individuals cannot spit, mouthwash and mouth rinses may not be able to be used, and, additionally, the ingredients, such as alcohol, cannot be used with some medications for younger or older persons, in general.

If you are interested in mouthwash or mouth rinse, remember to ask your doctor or dentist's office with regard to safety.

9) Step 9: Lip balm - remember to read the ingredients. Use a lip balm to prevent chapping/tearing/bleeding of the lips.

For example, ask the pharmacist if this is okay for your son or daughter:

Examples:

a) *Neosporin Lip Health Overnight Renewal Therapy*

b) *Dr. Bronner's-Organic Lip Balm-Unscented, Made with Organic Beeswax & Avocado Oil*

10) Step 10: Keeping caregivers’ teeth, gums, and jawbone in good shape is important! There is a website for an excellent toothpaste in both its original flavor and minty wintergreen. This is so important for caregivers of disabled persons, but, if you are interested in this helpful toothpaste for your disabled relative but cannot spit, first ask their dentist about the possibility of using/swallowing this toothpaste. For caregivers who wish to stop periodontal disease progression, visit www.tartarend.com.

11) Step 11: Of course, find a happy, respectful, knowledgeable, very friendly dental office that is experienced with disabled persons, can continue with hygiene appointments and dental check-ups at least twice per year for many years, and can even clean their loved one’s teeth standing up together!