Building Better Oral Health Communities

Better Oral Health in Home Care

Seeing a dental professional
Building Better Oral Health Communities
Better Oral Health in Home Care

Prepared by
Ms Adrienne Lewis, RN, BN, MNSstud, MPM,
Project Director, SA Dental Service
Ms Eliza Manuel, RN, BA, LLB,
Project Manager, SA Dental Service

With acknowledgement
Dr Peter King, BDS, MDS, BA,
Geriatric Dentistry Specialist
Dr Dymphna Cudmore, BDS,
Statewide Lead Clinician, SA Dental Service
Dr James Grealy, RN, PhD,
Dementia Care Consultant
Ms Glenda Whiting, RN, RMA, BN, MBA, MEd,
Principal Lecturer - Health, TAFE SA

This resource was developed by the Building Better Oral Health Communities Project which was funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services under the Encouraging Better Practice in Aged Care (EBPAC) Initiative (2012-2014).

The Building Better Oral Health Communities Project was led by SA Dental Service in collaboration with:
• Helping Hand Aged Care Inc SA
• Aboriginal Elders & Community Care Services Inc SA
• BaptistCare NSW & ACT
• Hunter New England Oral Health, NSW
• The University of Adelaide, SA - School of Nursing & ARCPOH.

Disclaimer
While every effort was made to ensure the information was accurate and up to date at the time of production, some information may become superseded as future research and new oral hygiene products are developed. In addition, the information in this resource is not intended as a substitute for a health professional's advice in relation to any oral health issues of concern.

Creator
Lewis, Adrienne, author.

Title
Better oral health in home care / prepared by: Adrienne Lewis, Eliza Manuel.

ISBN
9781742437323 (ebook)

Notes
Includes bibliographical references.

Subjects
Older people--Dental care--South Australia
Older people--Health and hygiene--South Australia
Mouth--Care and hygiene--South Australia

Other Creators/Contributors
Manuel, Eliza, author.
Building Better Oral Health Communities Project.
South Australian Dental Service.

Dewey Number
362.197600846

For more information
South Australian (SA) Dental Service
GPO Box 864
Adelaide, SA 5001
+61 8 8222 8222
Email: sadental@health.sa.gov.au

www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons
Public–11–A1

© SA Dental Service,
Central Adelaide Local Health Network 2014

If you want to alter, transform or build upon this work, you are invited to contact SA Dental Service.

Design by We’re Open
www.wereopen.com.au
Seeing a dental professional

Poor patterns of dental care undermine good oral health and compromises healthy ageing. Surveys have found people over 75 years of age visit a dentist less frequently than other age groups. Many older people only see a dental professional when they have a painful and urgent problem. Reasons for this are physical and cognitive impairment as well as difficulties with transport, past negative experiences, anxiety and cost.

A routine oral health assessment and support with assisting clients to see a dental professional will help them maintain good oral health.

Better oral health in home care

Encourage and support clients by working with the care coordinator and the client’s family to ensure:
• an oral health assessment takes place on a regular basis and when the need arises
• when a dental referral is made the client is assisted to attend their dental appointment.

This is important because:
• seeing a dental professional for oral health care will help maintain a healthy mouth, quality of life and sense of wellbeing.
An oral health assessment may be performed by the GP as part of an older person’s medical assessment or by the nurse or care coordinator on commencement of home care support and subsequently at the client’s annual review and as the need arises.

The aim of an oral health assessment is to ensure oral health is a recognised and practiced part of general health assessment and that appropriate care planning and dental referral are delivered when required.

The six question oral health assessment tool was developed to help non-dental health workers identify older people who are experiencing or who are at risk of poor oral health.

These six simple questions are predictive of an older person’s need for dental treatment. A ‘yes’ to any of the six questions indicates a dental referral is required.

This tool can be used for older people who can reliably self-report.

For older people who cannot reliably self-report or who need a clinical assessment the Oral Health Assessment Tool (OHAT) can be used. The OHAT consists of a visual inspection of eight categories of oral health which are assessed as healthy, changes or unhealthy. An unhealthy check indicates the need for a dental referral.

This clinical assessment does not replace a comprehensive examination by a dentist but is to be used by non-dental health workers, such as the GP, nurse or care coordinator, as a screening tool to monitor a client’s oral health, plan and evaluate oral care and trigger a dental referral.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healthy</th>
<th>Changes</th>
<th>Unhealthy</th>
<th>Dental Referral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lips</strong></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Tick" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="false" alt="Tick" /> <img src="true" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth, pink, moist</td>
<td>Dry, chapped or red at corners</td>
<td>Swelling or lump, red/white/ulcerated bleeding/ulcerated at corners *</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tongue</strong></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Tick" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="false" alt="Tick" /> <img src="true" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal moist, roughness, pink</td>
<td>Patchy, fissured, red, coated</td>
<td>Patch that is red and/or white/ulcerated, swollen *</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gums and Oral Tissue</strong></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Tick" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="false" alt="Tick" /> <img src="true" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moist, pink, smooth, no bleeding</td>
<td>Dry, shiny, rough, red, swollen, sore, one ulcer/sore spot, sore under dentures</td>
<td>Swollen, bleeding, ulcers, white/red patches, generalised redness under dentures *</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saliva</strong></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Tick" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="false" alt="Tick" /> <img src="true" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moist tissues watery and free flowing</td>
<td>Dry, sticky tissues, little saliva present, resident thinks they have a dry mouth</td>
<td>Tissues parched and red, very little/no saliva present, saliva is thick, resident thinks they have a dry mouth *</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Teeth</strong></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Tick" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="false" alt="Tick" /> <img src="true" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dentures</strong></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Tick" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="false" alt="Tick" /> <img src="true" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No broken areas or teeth, worn regularly, and named</td>
<td>1 broken area or tooth, or worn 1-2 hours per day only or not named</td>
<td>1 or more broken areas or teeth, denture missing/not worn, need adhesive, or not named *</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oral Cleanliness</strong></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Tick" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="false" alt="Tick" /> <img src="true" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean and no food particles or tartar in mouth or on dentures</td>
<td>Food, tartar, plaque 1-2 areas of mouth, or on small area of dentures</td>
<td>Food particles, tartar, plaque most areas of mouth, or on most of dentures *</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dental Pain</strong></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Tick" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="false" alt="Tick" /> <img src="true" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
<td><img src="true" alt="Yes" /> <img src="false" alt="No" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Unhealthy signs usually indicate referral to a dentist is necessary.
If the client is the holder of a Centrelink pension or health care card they are eligible for public dental care. Be aware that public dental clinics may charge clients a small co-payment for dental treatment.

**Dental referral pathway**

For clients who are not eligible for public dental care and who don’t have a preferred private dentist, contact the Australian Dental Association for further information.

**Oral health assessment**

- 6 question oral health assessment tool
- Oral health assessment tool (OHAT)

---

**No dental referral**

- Continue with current oral health care plan

**Non-urgent dental referral**

- Review oral health care plan
- Dental appointment required

**Emergency dental referral**

Urgent dental review required for:
- facial swelling
- uncontrollable pain
- uncontrollable bleeding
- trauma

**Public dental clinic**

Contact clinic if a client has:
- Centrelink pension card
- Centrelink health care card

**Private dental clinic**

Contact clinic if a client has:
- private health fund
- DVA gold card
- self-funded

**After hours**

- Contact GP
- Public hospital emergency department
- Private dentist if appropriate
If a client is unable to self-manage, coordinated planning and support between the family, care coordinator, care worker and dental clinic staff will be needed to ensure the client is able to attend their dental appointment.

This includes information such as consent, a current medical history, current medications, appropriate concession cards and assistance with transport or an escort if needed.

Check list

To ensure the dental visit is successful it is important to work out beforehand what assistance is needed and who is responsible for it.

Appointment
- Client can self-manage
- Family member to arrange
- Care coordinator to arrange

Transport
- Client can self-manage
- Family member to arrange
- Care worker required

Escort
- Client can self-manage
- Family member required
- Care worker required

Consent
- Client can self-consent
- Guardian consent required
- Guardian details provided to dentist

Current medical history
- Client can self-manage
- Family member to provide
- Care coordinator to provide

Current medications
- Client can self-manage
- Family member to provide
- Care coordinator to provide
- Webster pack to be taken to dental appointment

Interpreter
- Family to arrange with dental clinic
- Care coordinator to arrange with dental clinic

Wheelchair
- Does the client need a dental clinic with a wheelchair tilt?

Public dental clinic
- Medicare card
- Centrelink pension card or health care card
- Money for co-payment costs (check with dental clinic)

Private dental clinic
- Private health fund card
- DVA gold card
- Money to cover cost

Client unable to attend appointment
- Client can cancel and reschedule
- Family member to cancel and reschedule
- Care coordinator to cancel and reschedule