



Newsletter Articles

How can I help my ageing parents look after their teeth?



This article helps you support older parents to look after their teeth.

Why it matters

- Broken or lost teeth cause pain and make eating and talking harder.
- They can make people feel less confident and less social.
- Looking after teeth helps a person keep their pride and dignity.
- In Australia, people over 75 have on average 24 out of 28 teeth decayed, missing or filled.
- Preventing problems costs less than fixing them.

Find out what they have

Do they have their own teeth, full or partial dentures, implants, bridges or a mix?

Why care must change with age

- **Dry mouth** from age and medicines. This is a huge problem. Plaque becomes sticky and teeth lose their natural protection.
- Old dental work gets older and more complex.
- Hands do not work as well.

- Diet changes.

How you can help

- Encourage visits to a dentist who focuses on prevention.
- Change to better toothpastes that are less drying.
- Add dry mouth gels or sprays.
- Less sugar. Offer sugar-free or xylitol lollies instead.
- Try easy-grip toothbrushes and easier ways to clean between teeth.
- If they live in a care home, check they have a mouth care plan and the right products.
- Start early if you can, and be patient with change.