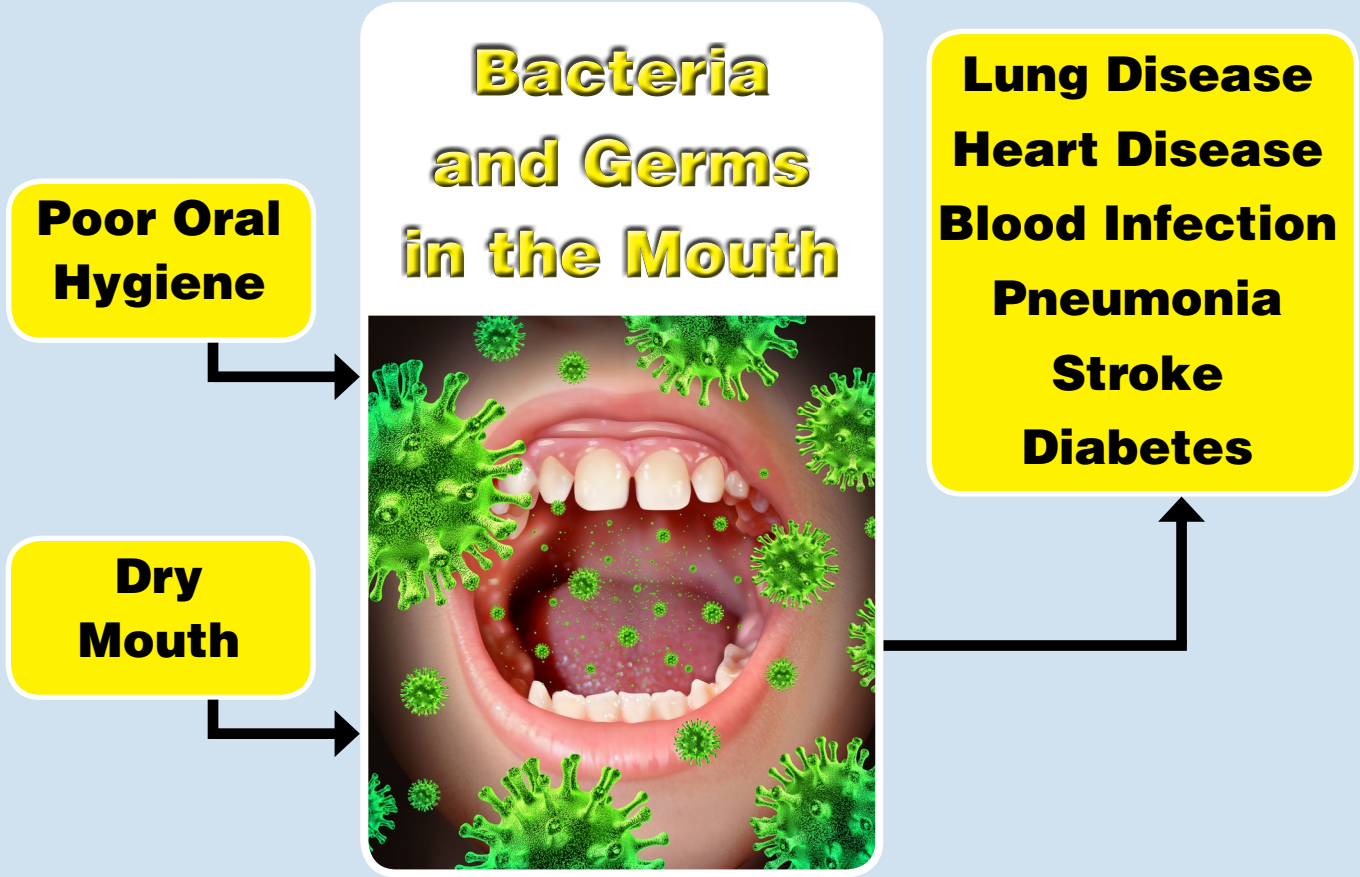


Oral Care

People with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) often have challenges to ordinary activities of daily living, such as brushing teeth. Some may be on medications that cause xerostomia (dry mouth), which is a common side effect.



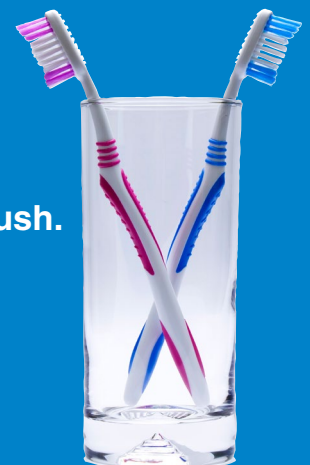
Keep mouths moist and clean to prevent disease. A toothbrush is the best way to clean the mouth, even if there are few teeth or no teeth.

Take your time! Make tooth brushing a relaxed, fun time.

Some ideas to make oral care fun:




- ◆ Let the individual select and purchase his/her own toothbrush. They may want something colorful;
- ◆ Try an electric toothbrush;
- ◆ Try different toothpastes, even kids' sweet toothpaste.

Watch out for dry mouth. Many medications cause drying.






Help for Common Tooth Brushing Problems

GRABBING/HITTING




-  Maybe the individual is scared or startled.
-  Slow down. Use a lot of praise.
-  Let the individual hold a toothbrush, a cup, or another preferred item.

WON'T OPEN MOUTH

-  Stay positive and calm.
-  Give them their toothbrush and encourage them to brush independently.
-  Put some toothpaste on the lips so they can smell and taste it.



BITING THE TOOTHBRUSH

-  Stop! Don't pull on the brush. (Pulling will activate a bite reflex and the individual will bite harder.)
-  Distract the individual so they will relax their jaw.
-  Return to a fun, calm atmosphere before trying again.