

# Let's Chew on This: Infection Prevention Practices while Providing Oral Care and Feeding Residents



**Project Firstline**  
Healthcare-Associated Infections Program  
Center for Health Care Quality  
California Department of Public Health



# Implicit Bias

- Describes how our unconscious attitudes or judgements can influence our thoughts, decisions, or actions
- Includes involuntary, unintentional perceptions made without awareness
- Occurs as our brains sort information and perceive data to understand our world
- Affects our decisions, contributing to societal disparities
  - Self awareness about implicit bias can promote healthcare diversity and equality
- Learn more about your own implicit bias at [Project Implicit](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/) (implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/)



# INFECTION PREVENTION STARTS WITH YOU!



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# Objectives

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- Review infection prevention principles and recommendations for oral care and feeding in skilled nursing facilities (SNFs)
  - Discuss the importance of oral care and proper feeding techniques
  - Identify infection prevention practices during oral care and feeding
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# Reflection

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**As CNAs, what do you think is the most important reason to provide oral care to your residents?**



# Oral Care

**Oral care is the care of the mouth, teeth, and gums**

Let's review:

- Oral hygiene
- Infection prevention during oral care
  - Transmission and prevention
  - What to look for
- Toothbrush care
- Denture care



## Oral Care

- Good oral hygiene helps prevent multiple diseases
- Poor dental hygiene can make the following conditions worse:
  - Cardiovascular disease
  - Diabetes
  - Malnutrition
  - Infections
  - Pneumonia



# Infection Transmission and Prevention

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- The mouth can spread potentially infectious fluids and secretions
  - Examples: Herpes simplex virus, strep throat, pneumonia mononucleosis, influenza, pneumonia
- Infection prevention while performing oral care with residents include:
  - Standard Precautions, hand hygiene, proper personal protective equipment (PPE) use

# PPE During Oral Care

- Gloves
  - Wear when there is possible contact with blood or body fluids, mucous membranes, non-intact skin
- Gowns
  - Protect skin and clothing during procedures or activities where contact with blood or body fluids is anticipated
- Mouth, nose, and eye protection
  - Wear during procedures that are likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood or other body fluids



**Perform hand hygiene before putting on and after taking off your PPE.**

# Infection Prevention while Brushing

- Perform hand hygiene and don PPE before task
- Reduce the risk of aspiration:
  - Sit resident up at least 45°
  - Use a small amount of toothpaste
  - Have resident rinse and spit after brushing; or if resident is unable, suction saliva and toothpaste from the mouth
- Inspect the mouth for signs of infection
- Remove and dispose of gloves, and perform hand hygiene



A pea-sized amount of toothpaste is plenty!

# Toothbrush Care

- Rinse with tap water until clean
- Air-dry
- Store upright
- Avoid soaking or devices to clean the brush
- Avoid covering
- Replace every 3 to 4 months



# Knowledge Check

## True or False?

The effectiveness of toothbrushing mainly comes from the *toothpaste*, which removes buildup and plaque.



# Knowledge Check

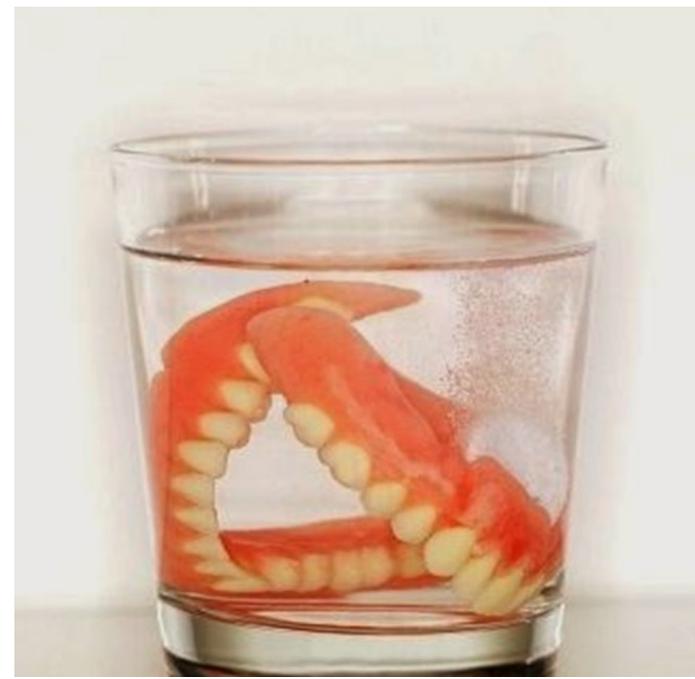
**False**

The effectiveness of toothbrushing mainly comes from the **toothpaste** *manual back and forth brushing*, which removes buildup and plaque.



## Denture Care

- Remove at night
- Brush before placing into a cup of water
- Rinse and brush again before putting back in the mouth
- Always keep in water when not in the mouth
- Change denture water daily



# Dry Mouth

- More than 70% of adults aged 65 and older have severe periodontal (gum) disease\*



## Dry mouth can lead to:

- Periodontal disease
- Malnutrition
- Halitosis (bad breath)
- Infection

\*Periodontal Disease, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
([www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/conditions/periodontal-disease.html](http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/conditions/periodontal-disease.html))

# What Does an Oral Infection Look Like?

- Toothache
- Sensitivity to hot or cold temperatures
- Unusual bad breath
- Bitter taste in mouth
- Fever
- Pain
- Swollen or bleeding gums
- Any changes in color or appearance of lumps on your tongue, cheeks, gums, or palate
- Unusually dry mouth

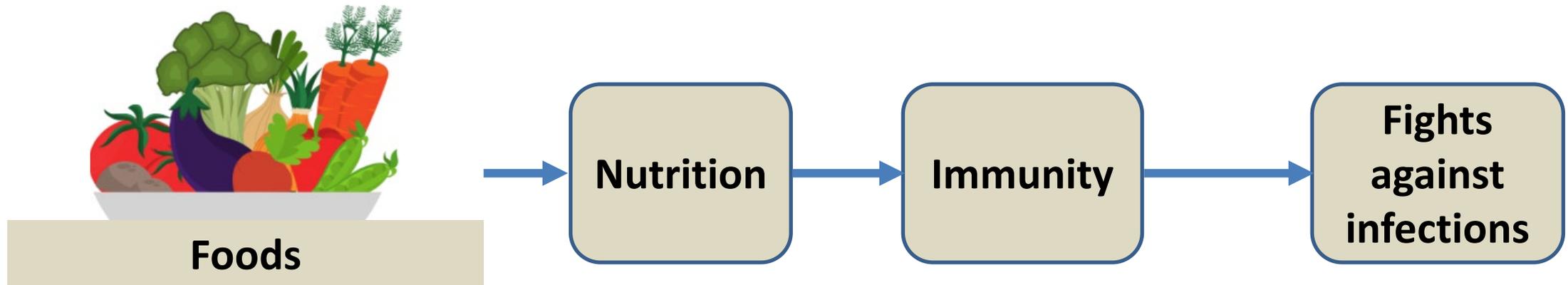


**FEEDING**



# Prevent Infections from Getting Worse with Proper Nutrition

- **Feeding** is a way of delivering **nutrition** and **hydration** to another person
- Nutrition and hydration:
  - Prevent infections by boosting the immune system
  - Prevent malnutrition due to medications



# Preventing Aspiration Events

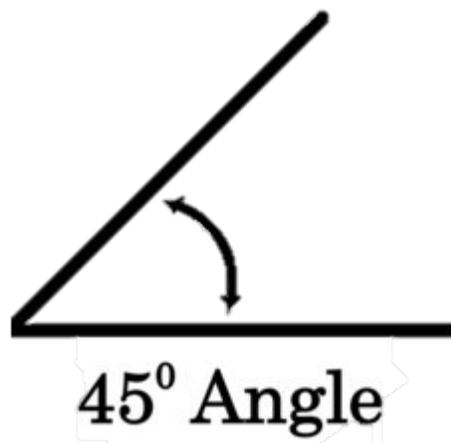
## Before and after oral feeding:

- Keep bed elevated to at least  $45^{\circ}$ 
  - Always follow facility policy



## During oral feeding:

- Allow plenty of time to chew foods completely
- Alternate giving solid and liquid foods
- Monitor for swallowing difficulties



# Difficulty with Swallowing Food

- Swallowing difficulty increases the risk of respiratory infections
- Monitor for signs of swallowing difficulty:
  - Coughing or choking
  - Unwillingness to eat or eating slowly
  - Visibly struggling to chew foods
  - Dribbling of saliva or food



**Immediately report swallowing difficulty to the nurse.**

# Infection Prevention Practices while Feeding

- Check and maintain the temperature of the food
- Perform hand hygiene before feeding
- Wear gloves, if necessary
- After feeding, clean the area where tray was kept
- Remove the towel, food tray, and utensils
- Discard gloves and perform hand hygiene
- Chart the intake



## Knowledge Check

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***When two residents are residing in a same room, before feeding the second resident, what infection prevention practice should this CNA follow immediately after feeding the first resident?***

- A. Perform hand hygiene
  - B. Give the first resident a bath
  - C. Check the temperature of your resident
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# Knowledge Check

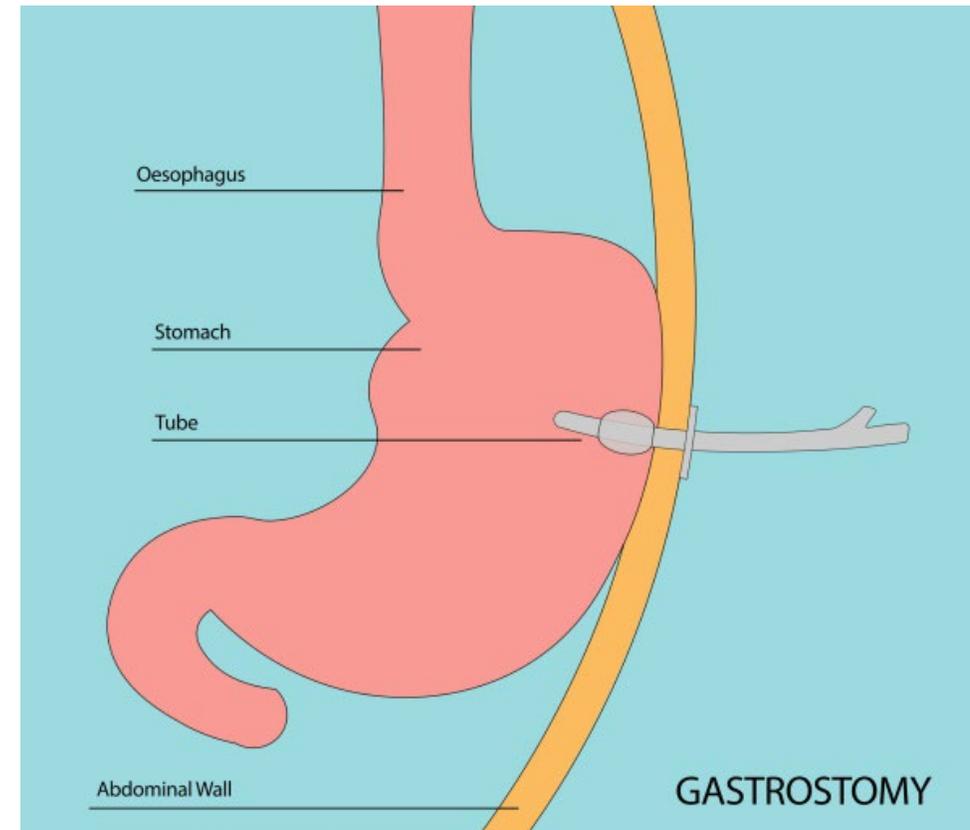
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# TUBE FEEDING (ENTERAL NUTRITION)



# Complications That Can Lead to Infection

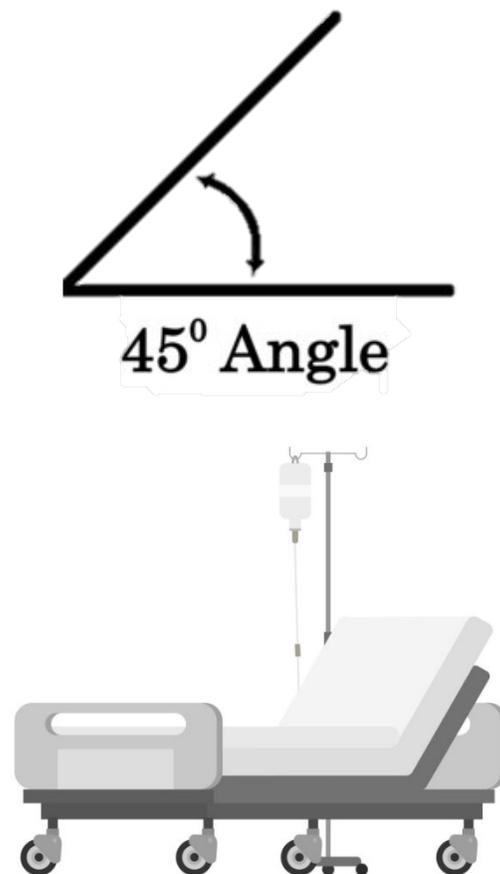
- Aspiration
- Tube pulled out of place
- Infection of the insertion site



# Recognizing and Preventing Aspiration

## Signs and Symptoms

- Vital sign changes
  - Rapid breathing
  - Change in blood pressure
  - Rapid heart rate
- “Gurgling” or choking sounds
- Presence of tube feeding in mouth



## Prevention Practices

- Keep head of the bed elevated to at least 45°
- Remain in this position for at least 30 minutes after feeding
- Always be aware of who is at risk and never leave them alone when eating

# Knowledge Check

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***Which of the following could be a sign of infection around the tube insertion site? (Select all that apply)***

- A. Inflammation or redness
- B. Thick or foul-smelling discharge
- C. Pain or discomfort near the site
- D. Fever

# Knowledge Check

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*Which of the following could be a sign of infection around the tube insertion site? (Select all that apply)*

- A. Inflammation or redness**
- B. Thick or foul-smelling discharge**
- C. Pain or discomfort near the site**
- D. Fever**

# Recognizing and Preventing Insertion Site Infection

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## Signs and Symptoms

- Inflammation or redness around the insertion site
- Thick or foul-smelling discharge
- Pain or discomfort
- Fever

## Prevention Practices

- Verify tube integrity
- Secure tubes when repositioning
- Perform hand hygiene and wear gloves
- Never reinsert a tube that becomes dislodged
- Follow bathing procedures
- Ensure dressings remain clean and dry

# Highlights

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- Good oral care helps prevent spread of infection
  - Perform hand hygiene before and after oral care
  - Keep feeding tubes secure and insertion sites clean to prevent infection
  - Elevate the head of the bed to at least 45° during feeding to prevent aspiration pneumonia
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# References

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- Denture care: How do I clean dentures? | Mayo Clinic  
([www.mayoclinic.org/denture-care/expert-answers/faq-20058375](http://www.mayoclinic.org/denture-care/expert-answers/faq-20058375))
  - National Nursing Home Survey | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
([www.cdc.gov/nchs/nnhs/nnhs\\_products.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nnhs/nnhs_products.htm))
  - Nursing Home Infection Preventionist Training Course | CDC  
([www.train.org/cdctrain/training\\_plan/3814](http://www.train.org/cdctrain/training_plan/3814))
  - Periodontal Disease | CDC  
([www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/conditions/periodontal-disease.html](http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/conditions/periodontal-disease.html))
  - Worker protections against occupational exposure to infectious diseases | Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)  
([www.osha.gov/bloodborne-pathogens/worker-protections](http://www.osha.gov/bloodborne-pathogens/worker-protections))
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# QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION



# Project Firstline Resources

Visit the [Project Firstline Website](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/HAI/Pages/ProjectFirstline.aspx)

([www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/HAI/Pages/ProjectFirstline.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/HAI/Pages/ProjectFirstline.aspx))

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