



# Senior Smiles

A caregiver's guide to supporting a healthy smile

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<sup>1</sup> "Do You Have Dry Mouth?" Journal of the American Dental Association 133 no. 10 (2002): 1455. <sup>2</sup> "Nearly 7 in 10 Americans Take Prescription Drugs, Mayo Clinic, Olmsted Medical Center Find," Mayo Clinic, web.



## Tips for Maintaining Healthy Smiles

As the people you care for grow older, supporting their oral and overall health will help protect their teeth for years to come.



## Record an Oral Health History

Pay close attention to how medical conditions and medications are affecting your loved one's oral health.



- Untreated gum disease can lead to receding gums, loose teeth, and even tooth loss. It is also linked to other health issues like Alzheimer's disease, heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory problems.
- Many medications can affect oral health, and complications can include dry mouth, mouth sores, gum swelling and bone loss. Dry mouth can also increase the risk for gum disease or tooth decay.<sup>1</sup>



## Maintain a Regular Oral Health Routine

- Brush teeth twice a day and floss once a day.
- Clean their dentures daily and remove them each night.
- Ensure they're drinking water frequently throughout the day.
- Check for any broken teeth, sores, blisters, or lumps.
- Take them to the dentist regularly (or as able) for cleanings and exams.



## Care for Dentures

- Brush daily with a soft toothbrush or denture cleaning brush.
- Use denture cleaner, hand soap, or dishwashing soap, and rinse with cool water.
- Brush gums and any remaining teeth.

When not being used, dentures should be covered with water or a denture cleaning solution. If the person you're caring for notices a change in fit, make an appointment with their dentist.