

Graduated Guidance for Toothbrushing

Step #1: Expect daily oral hygiene care!

Additional Tips for Improved Brushing

Start small with each step in toothbrushing: picking up the brush, turning on the water, wetting the bristles, putting the toothpaste on the bristles, brushing whatever part of the mouth and teeth the person wishes to brush, cleaning the brush, storing it.

Use support when appropriate – coaching, gestures and hand-over-hand to prompt and demonstrate.

- **Independent brushing**
- **Verbal prompts**
- **Gestural prompts**
- **Physical prompts**
- **Active hand over hand**
- **Passive hand over hand**
- **Dependent on caregiver to complete the task**

Using hand-over-hand techniques builds muscle memory.

Showing a video of a person brushing properly.

Encouraging with a calm voice appropriate to the person.

Counting brush strokes supports better brushing by giving people a way to concentrate on what they are doing. Counting also distracts people. For individuals with sensory issues limit counting to three or four and then stop. Repeat .

Playing a favorite song or music can reinforce, improve and create a habit of physical movement of toothbrushing. It can increase the length of time a person brushes and the thoroughness of brushing.

Using a brush that people prefer gives them additional control over brushing. There are so many different types of brushes and so many preferences. Some people benefit by changing the style of brushes from time to time and to experimenting with power brushes.

Using a toothpaste flavor that people prefer is an important factor when encouraging people to brush more thoroughly.