Six of the best ways to assist in the maintenance of a healthy mouth

Clean your mouth every morning and every night.

Use only a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste to protect your teeth.

Spit - do not rinse after brushing so the fluoride can soak into your teeth.

Use a soft toothbrush to brush your teeth and to clean your gums and tongue.

If you require help, a care giver may sometimes use an extra toothbrush, so that they can see inside your mouth.

Replace your toothbrush with a new one with the change of seasons (every three months).

If you wear dentures clean them by brushing with a denture brush using soap and water. Rinse well. Disinfect dentures once a week. Dentures should have your name on them.

If you wear dentures take your dentures out overnight to rest your gums. Soak your cleaned dentures in a container with cold water.

Keep your mouth moist by sipping water.

A lip moisturiser may be helpful.

Try to reduce the amount of sugary drinks, juices and coffee you drink.

Cut down on sugary foods and beverages, particularly between meals.
A healthy mouth will improve overall health and well-being.

When your mouth is not clean, germs from the mouth may enter the airways and cause chest infections such as pneumonia.

The same blood that goes through infected gums also goes through the rest of the body.

This may cause infections far away from the mouth and may increase the risk of having a heart attack or even a stroke.

When oral health is poor, it can lead to:
- bad breath
- bleeding gums
- dental pain and infection
- inability to eat
- low self-esteem
- poor/impaired speech
- tooth decay
- change in behavior when pain or infection is present

**Simple daily mouth care and regular checks will help protect you**

(Adapted from Australia’s Better Oral Health in Residential Care)