

A large, stylized graphic of a smile. The upper curve is a light orange shape, and the lower curve is a light blue shape. Two circles, one orange and one light blue, represent the eyes. The text 'Oral Health' is centered over the smile.

# Oral Health

# Table of Contents

- **What is Oral Hygiene?**
- **What is Oral Health?**

# Oral Hygiene

**Oral hygiene is the practice or action of cleaning your mouth.**

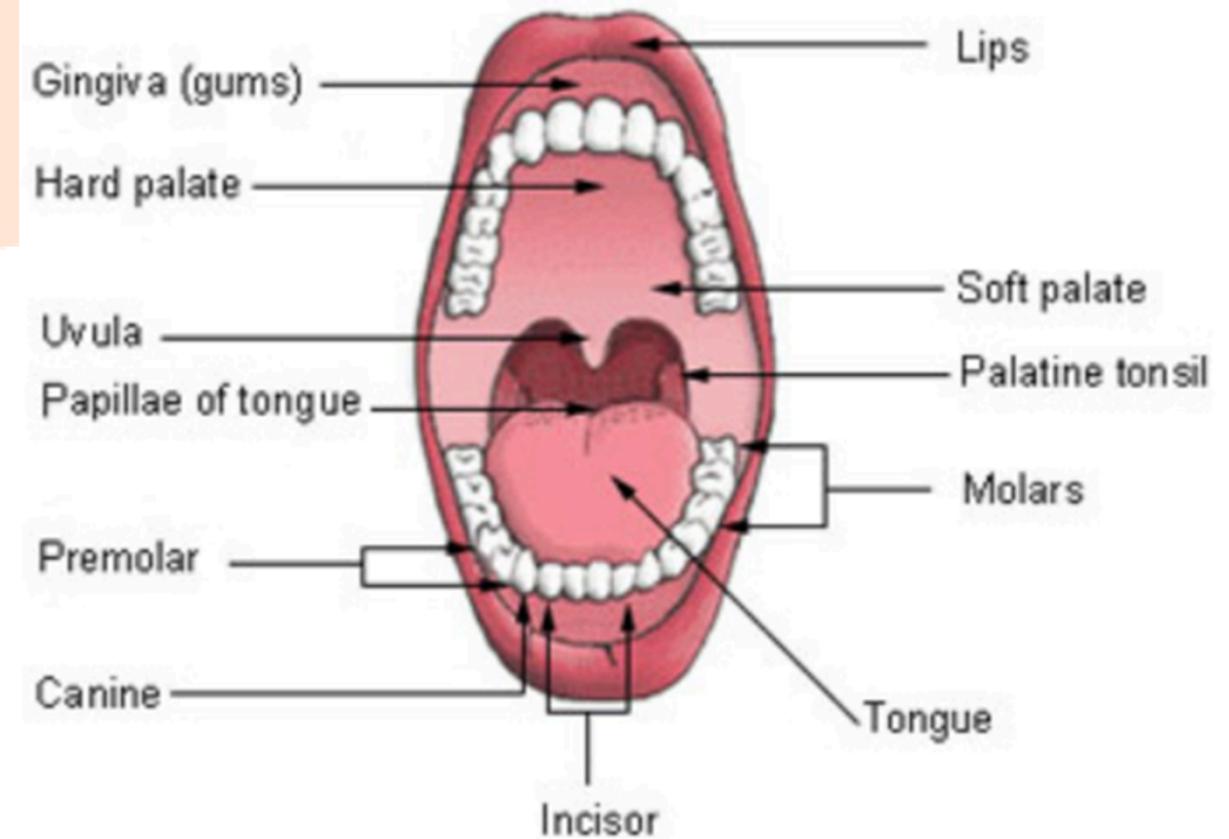
- Brushing teeth,
- Flossing, and
- Using mouthwash are all part of oral hygiene.

Good oral hygiene helps maintain oral health.

Oral Health is the condition of the mouth, gums, teeth and tongue.

- It is influenced by oral hygiene, medications, eating and drinking, and a person's overall health.

**Mouth (Oral Cavity)**



# Oral Health

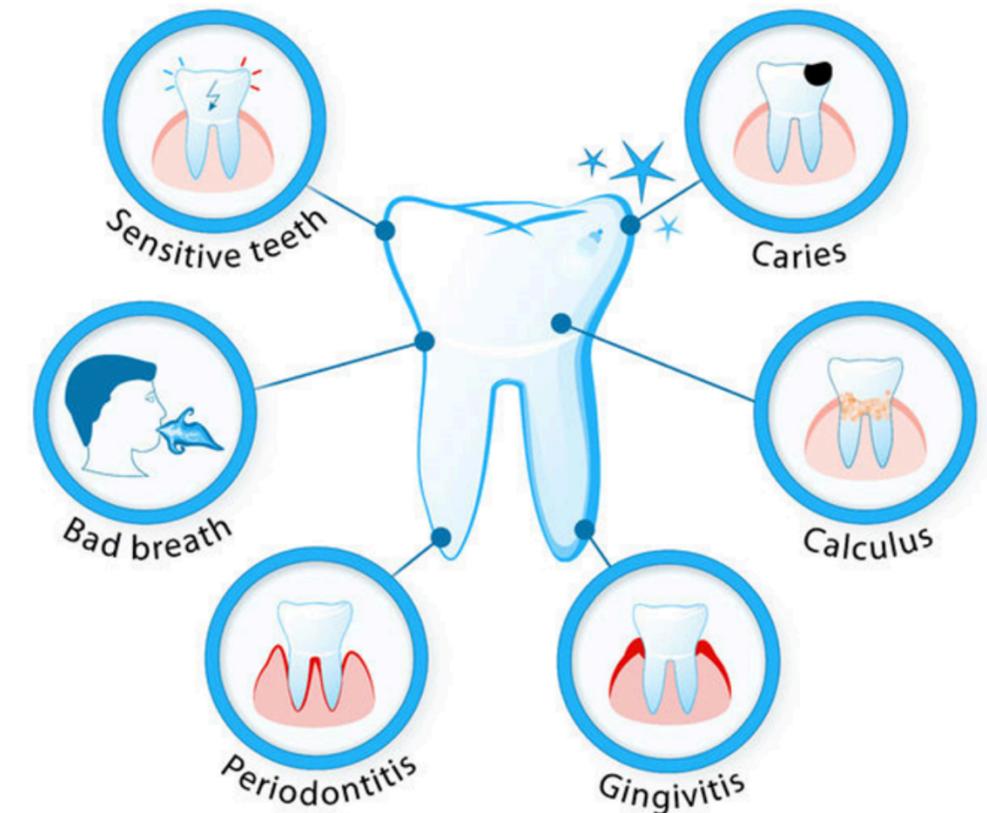
## Not maintaining oral health can lead to:

- Gum disease,
- Cavities,
- Secondary infections

## Can increase the risk for :

- Heart disease,
- Respiratory disease,
- Preterm birth and low birth weight.

### Dental problems



# Oral Health

**Oral diseases are not limited to affecting the mouth.  
These are inflammatory diseases.**

- The immune system is constantly active with inflammation, and this happens throughout your entire body
  - Not just the mouth.

# How Do Cavities Happen?

## STAGES OF TOOTH DECAY



1. WHITE SPOT  
LESION



2. ENAMEL  
DECAY



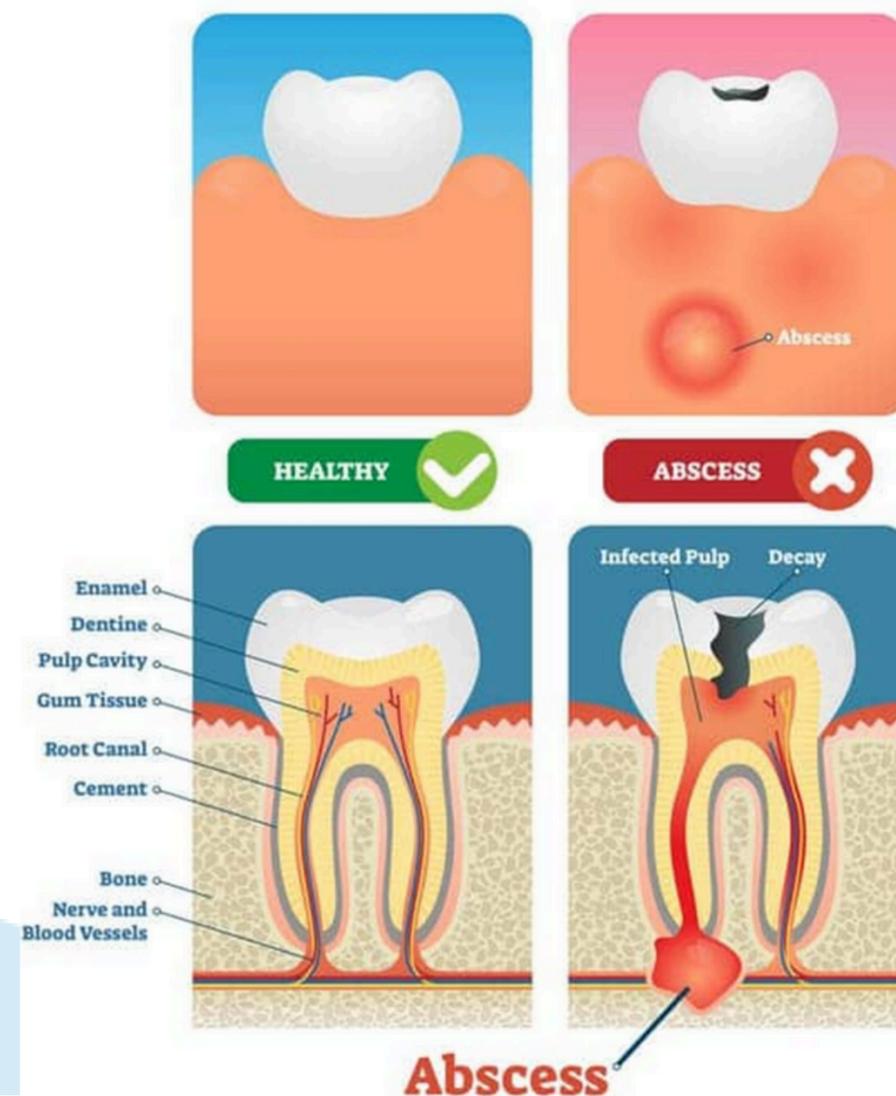
3. DENTIN  
DECAY



4. PULP  
INVOLVEMENT

# CAUTION!!!

Untreated cavities may lead to painful infections such as dental abscesses.



# Can You See Cavities???

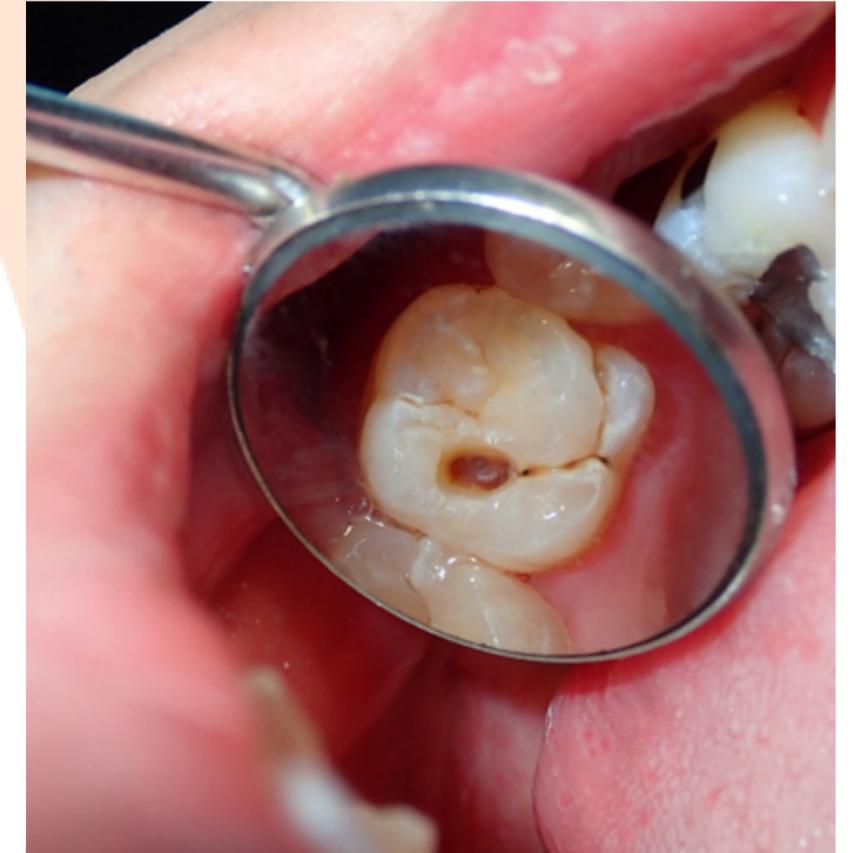


**White spot** - potential area of decay process starting



**Dark color to top of teeth is a cavity**

**YES,  
You  
CAN!**

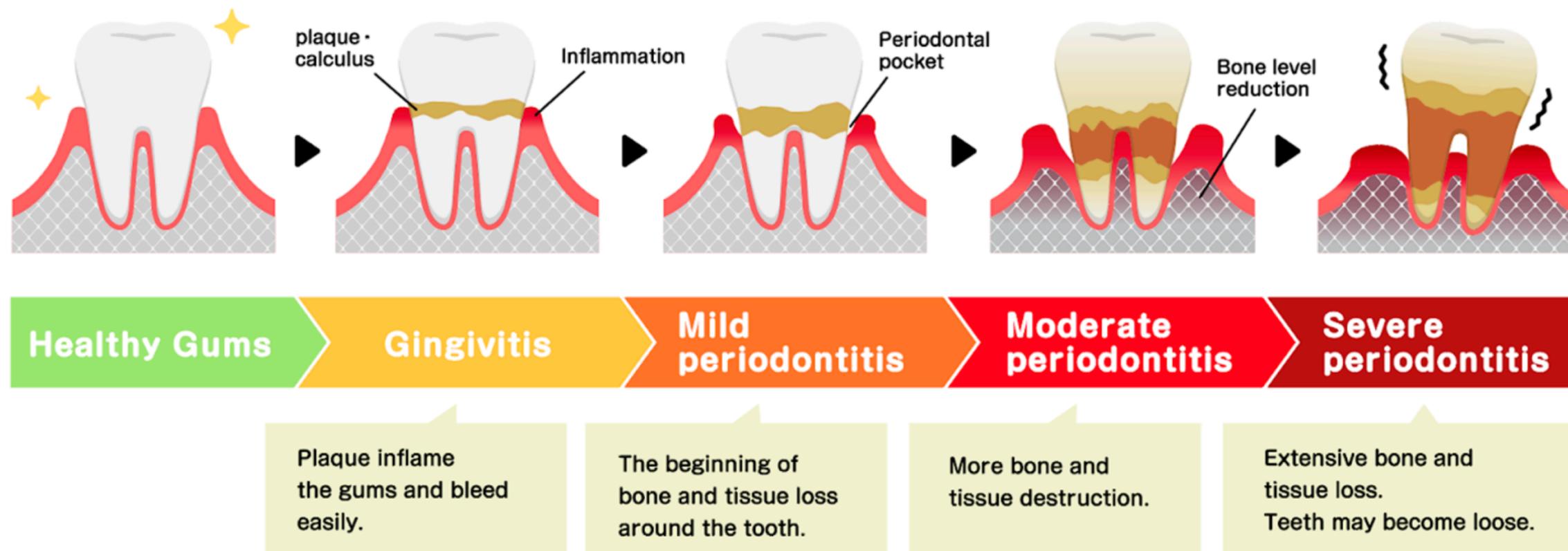


**Opened enamel - cavity**

# Gum Disease

**Gum disease, is caused by bacteria on the gums that support the teeth.**

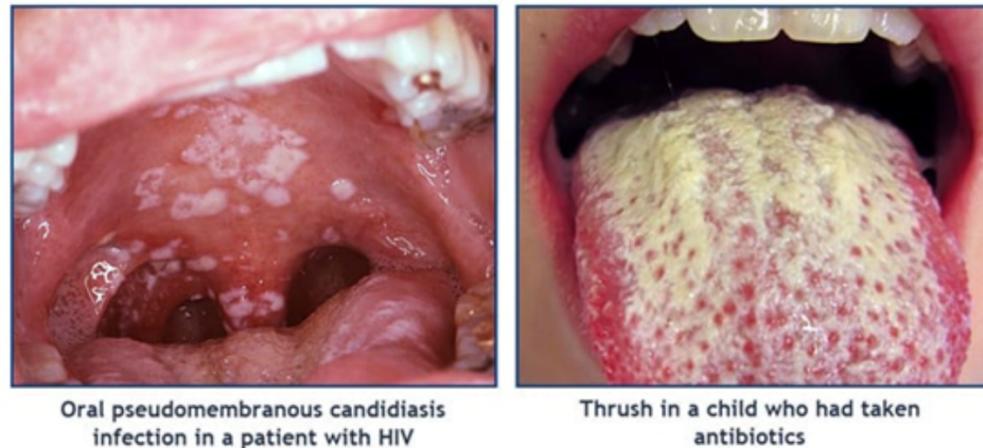
- It's usually caused by poor brushing and flossing habits that allow plaque to build up on your teeth and harden.
- Plaque is a sticky film of bacteria that can irritate and inflame the gums.



# Other Oral Infections

## Oral Candidiasis (Yeast Infection):

- Infection where a fungus accumulates in the mouth-usually tongue, cheeks, back of throat



## Risk Factors:

- Inhaled medications - rinse with water after!
- Dentures
- Diabetes

# Oral Health: Special Considerations

**People with developmental disabilities are at an increased risk for poor oral health.**

**Many factors contribute to this:**

- Medications
- Fear & Anxiety
- Physical & Mobility Limitations
- Barriers to communicating needs

# Oral Hygiene: Equipment

- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Water
- Disposable cloths or individuals wash cloth
- Sink or basin
- PPE: Disposable gloves, Eye shield
- Toothette, mouthwash (if ordered) or specific ordered rinse
- Floss or floss alternative



## Floss Alternatives



Floss Pick



Interdental Brush



End Tuft Brush

# Oral Hygiene: Best Practice

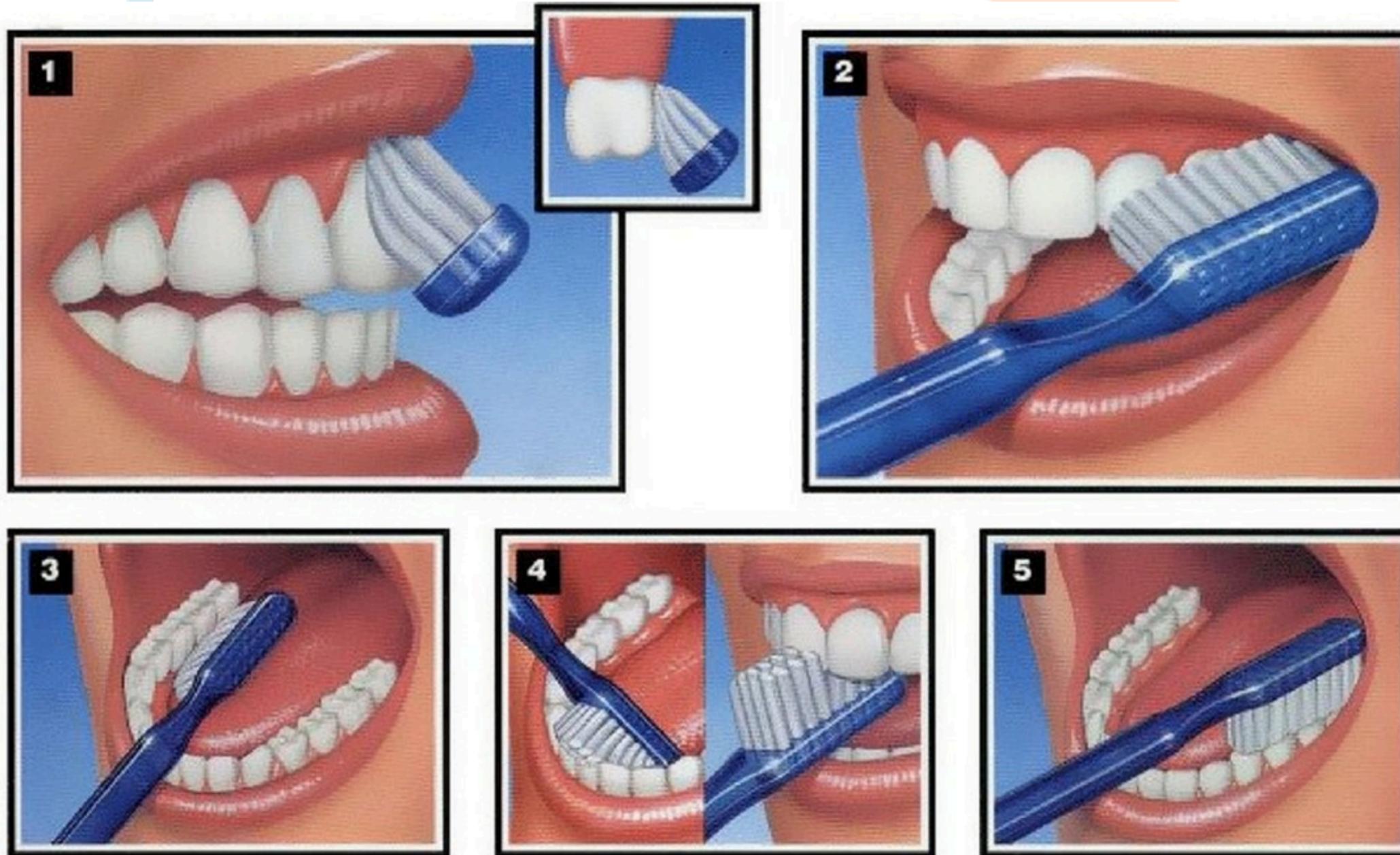
- Gather the necessary equipment or supplies as noted
- Get consent from the person to help.
  - Explain to the individual what will be happening.
  - Walk them through the process
  - Consider using a timer or a song that lasts 2 minutes to help the person remain calm and engaged.
- Position the individual as needed

**Note: person should be sitting up to minimize the possibility of aspiration/ choking.**

# Oral Hygiene: Procedure

- Brush a minimum of 2 times per day.
- Clean between the teeth with floss or an alternative a minimum of 1 time per day.
  - Don't forget your PPE when helping complete oral hygiene on someone else.
- Brush all surfaces of the teeth.
- Think of the teeth in the mouth as having 4 areas:
  - Spend 30 seconds on the;
    - Upper left
    - Upper right
    - Bottom left
    - Bottom right

# Oral Hygiene: 4 Tooth Surfaces



# Oral Hygiene: Procedure

- Floss if trained to do so.
  - Do not stick fingers in another person's mouth.
  - Use a flosser with handle to get to the back of the mouth while keeping fingers out.
- Swab mouth, or ask person to swish, with either an oral rinse, if ordered, or water.
- If a person isn't able to swish mouth rinse.
  - Dip a toothbrush into their mouth rinse product.
  - Apply topically on all tooth surfaces.



# Oral Health: Tips

- Allow breaks between different sections of the mouth or as needed.
- Ensure that the toothbrush is rinsed and stored appropriately.
  - Discard the flosser.
- Clean the individuals face of any toothpaste which can irritate that skin.
- Oral care at night should only be done when the person is done:
  - Eating and drinking, including food at med pass.

# Oral Health: Tips

**If a person is NPO (no eating or drinking by mouth) AND has a G-tube they may at times have a layer of dry film on their teeth.**

- Dampen a 2x2 gauze pad with mouthwash mixture (1 part mouthwash to 2 parts water) and wipe the teeth after brushing and flossing,
  - This will remove the dry film and refresh person's mouth.

**If a person has difficulty with oral cares, try using different toothpaste flavors.**

- Try toothpaste specific to children, since toothpaste is not as strong.

# Oral Health: Tips

**If people are displaying challenges with tooth brushing, encourage people to make choices within the scope of their oral cares whenever possible.**

- Take person to the store and allow them to pick out their own toothbrush and toothpaste.
- Some individuals may use a toothette instead of a toothbrush.
- Because of physical changes, a child-sized toothbrush may be appropriate.
- Toothpaste and mouthwash flavor should be chosen by the individual whenever possible.

# Water & Saliva's Role In Oral Health

- Drinking water is an important part of good oral hygiene.
  - It rinses the teeth and helps increase saliva (spit).
- Saliva helps wash away food and debris from sitting on the teeth and gums.
- Saliva helps neutralize acids and bacteria in the mouth.

# Nutrition's Role In Oral Health

- Refined sugars, like those commonly found in juices and snacks,
  - Cause tooth decay.
- Be mindful of refined sugar intake!
- Eating whole foods such as;
  - Vegetables,
  - Fruit, and
  - Protein

Promotes healthy gums and teeth!



# Oral Health: Conclusion

- Oral health requires good oral hygiene.
- Poor oral health can affect all aspects of a person's life.

**It is our responsibility to ensure that oral cares are done well every time.**