



Part Two:

Grandma Won't Brush!

Daily Oral Care for the Frail Elderly

Sarah Dirks, DDS

*Geriatric Dental Group of South Texas, Pa
7434 Louis Pasteur – Suite 234
San Antonio, Texas 78229*



Who are the Frail Elderly?

- They are functionally dependent on others
- They have multiple chronic illnesses, disabilities, and/or impairments
- Their limitations will complicate even routine dental care



Difficulties are Underestimated!

- Lack of time
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of skill or experience
- Lack of right supplies
- Lack of visibility, poor access
- Lack of saliva – bacteria and food sticks
- Lack of teeth - missing teeth make brushing harder
- Lack of cooperation







Benefits of Providing Daily Oral Care

- Keeps teeth serviceable
- Maintain ability to eat
- Maintain ability to taste food
- Boosts confidence – less isolation/depression
- Better oral health can improve overall health
- Improves quality of life







Part One:
Looking for Horses – not Zebras!
Common Oral Disorders in the Frail Elderly

Sarah J. Dirks, DDS
Geriatric Dentist
San Antonio, Texas 78229

www.geriatricdentalgroup.com

Results of Poor Oral Health

- Tooth Loss
- Cavities
- Gum disease
- Bad breath
- Accumulation of bacteria
- Aspiration pneumonia
- Links to overall health - diseases

Topics:

- Early Intervention & the Downward Spiral
- Daily Oral Care:
 - Basic Technique and Supplies
- Individualized Daily Oral Care
 - Special Tips and Technique
- Denture Care

Importance of Early Intervention

Spiral downward in oral health is inevitable with:

- Increased medical problems
- Decreased ability to tolerate dental care
- Decreased ability to be wear dentures
- Decreased ability to pay for dental care
- ***Decreased ability for self care***
- Decreased ability to get to dental office





LEASING

NORMANDY
TERRACE
NATIONAL BUREAU OF
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
2000 BAYVIEW
DALLAS, TEXAS 75210

TEXAS
U83-084

NORMANDY
TERRACE
AMBULANCE SERVICES
(830) 752-1126

405

Lack of daily oral care leads to a dental downward spiral

- Loss of ADLs – loss of ability for daily oral care
- Dry mouth due to medications
- More cavities – mouth pain
- Loss of teeth and/or gum disease
- Inability to chew normally
- Eat high carb soft foods – more cavities
- Decreased trips to dentist



Why the rapid decline in elderly?

1 Reason - Lack of daily oral care

- Dry mouth due to medications
- Softer foods – high in carbohydrates
- Collection of bacteria
- Aging fillings, aging crowns, aging root canals, aging dentures, etc.
- Chronic inflammation



Early Intervention to Prevent the Downward Spiral

Topics

- Early Intervention & the Downward Spiral
- **Daily Oral Care:**
 - Basic Technique and Supplies
- Individualized Daily Oral Care
 - Special Tips and Technique
- Denture Care

Basic Oral Care Technique

#1 Gather the goodies

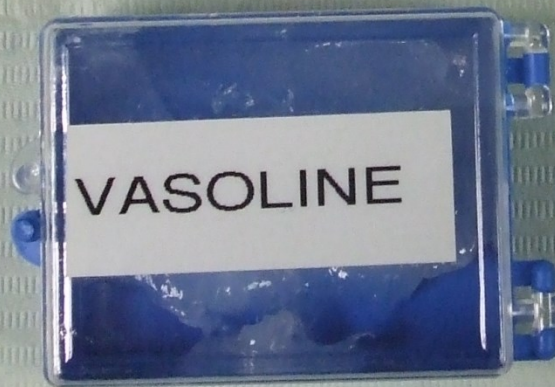
- Basic supplies
- Toothbrush/toothpaste/mouth prop
- Optional supplies

#2 Prompt and position

#3 Moisten the mouth

#4 Regular routine







Evaluate pros and cons

Type of bristles?



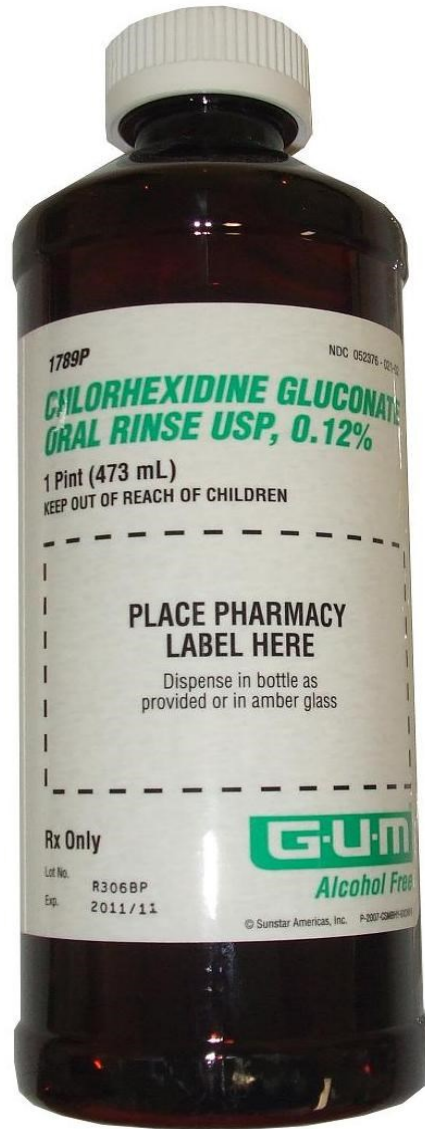


Toothpaste?

Mouthwash?



Chlorhexidine Gluconate rinse









Basic Oral Care Technique

- Gather the goodies
- Prompt and position
- Moisten the mouth
- Regular routine









Topics

- Early Intervention & the Downward Spiral
- Daily Oral Care:
 - Basic Technique and Supplies
- ***Individualized Daily Oral Care***
 - **Tips and Techniques**
- Denture Care

Tips:

- Brush 2X day – before bed most important
- Learn basic oral care techniques
 - Dentist, dental, hygienist or dental assistant
 - Training video – YouTube videos
- Drape patient with terry bath towel
- Recognize uncooperative behavior/agitation could indicate a serious dental problem

Individualized Oral Care

- Wide range of self care abilities!
- Proper supplies will depend on patient functional and cognitive abilities
- Foster independence
- Functional and/or cognitive limitations
 - Stroke? Arthritis? Eyesight?
 - Dementia? Forgetfulness?
 - Ability to reach sink, toothbrush, water, etc?

Functional Considerations

- Cognitive and emotional functioning?
 - Remember to brush?
 - Motivated to brush?
 - Depression? Avoidance?
 - Do not want to be a burden
 - Other physical needs overshadow oral needs

Functional Considerations

- Ability to navigate to sink or bathroom?
 - Ability to get reach sink/turn on faucet?
 - Wheelchair access? Walker access?
 - Open door to bathroom?
 - Purchase needed supplies?

Functional Considerations

- Specific choices for oral care supplies:
- Determining pros and cons:
 - Dexterity Limitations
 - Aspiration Potential
 - Ability to participate and/or inability to cooperate

Functional Considerations

- Specific choices for oral care supplies:
 - Dexterity Limitations
 - Dominant hand?
 - Arthritis? Stroke? Parkinson? Weakness?
 - Ability to open drawers/open toothpaste tube?

Determine Grip Strength







Modified handle
toothbrush

Electric
toothbrush

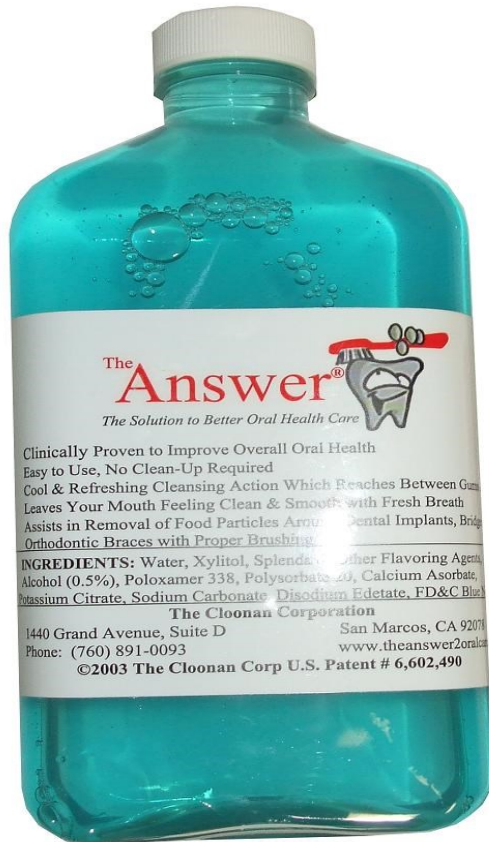


Functional Considerations

- Dexterity limitations?
- Aspiration risk?
 - Swallowing deficit?
 - Ability to swish?
 - Bed ridden?
 - Head position?

Aspiration Risk

- Muscles used in swallowing can become rigid and loose.
- Decreased ability to complete inability to encircle and propel food down the esophagus.
- At risk for swallowing left behind food debris and bacteria.
- At risk for choking on water/mouthwash and/or toothpaste



Matter loosened by soft bristles is removed along with fluids through suction head.



Finger control suction port located on back easily regulates suction with your finger tip.

Matter and fluids evacuate through the hollow handle and pass through the vacuum tube to be collected at wall or portable suction.





Evaluate pros and cons



Toothpaste?

Mouthwash?





Individualized Daily Oral Care Plan

- Dexterity issues
- Risk of aspiration
- Ability to participate and/or cooperate

Mild Limitations

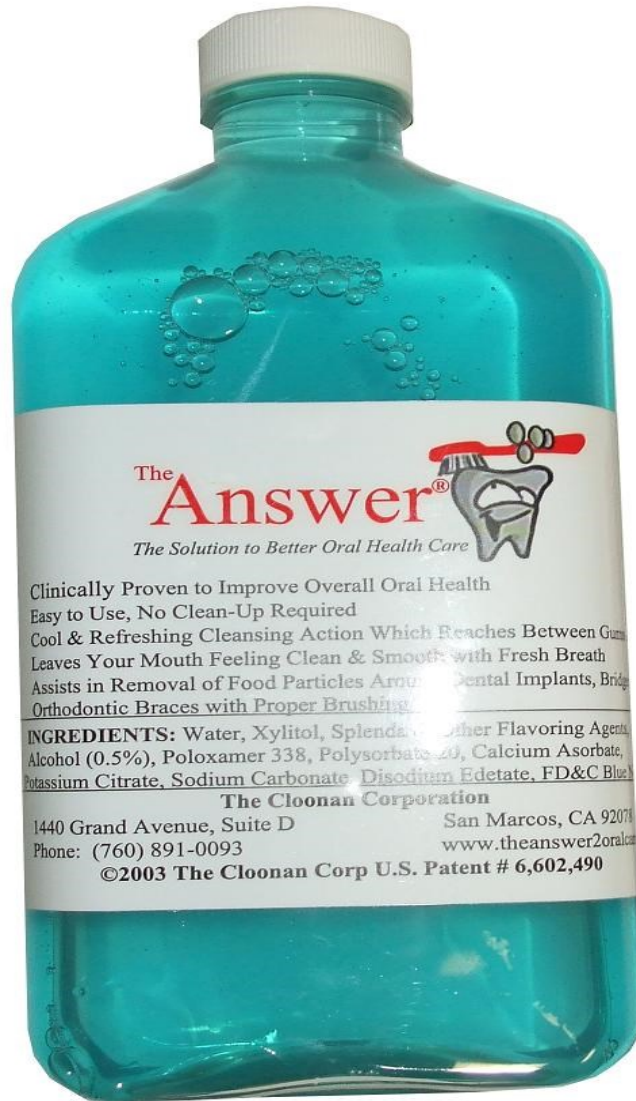
Early Stage Dementia

- Involve the patient!
- Self care with assistance
- Hand resident or family member the toothbrush (prompt and position)
- Place pea size gel toothpaste
 - Unless aspiration risk!
- Part of regular routine
- Praise

Moderate or Severe Limitations

Moderate or Late Stage Dementia

- Positive approach
- Never place fingers between teeth
- May require multiple providers
- Soft mouth prop?
- Extra soft toothbrush? Toothette?
- Water or non alcohol mouthwash?
- Specialty toothbrush with vacuum?
- Praise!
- Regular routine



The
Answer[®]



The Solution to Better Oral Health Care

Clinically Proven to Improve Overall Oral Health
Easy to Use, No Clean-Up Required
Cool & Refreshing Cleansing Action Which Reaches Between Gums
Leaves Your Mouth Feeling Clean & Smooth with Fresh Breath
Assists in Removal of Food Particles Around Dental Implants, Bridges
Orthodontic Braces with Proper Brushing

INGREDIENTS: Water, Xylitol, Splenda, Other Flavoring Agents,
Alcohol (0.5%), Poloxamer 338, Polysorbate 20, Calcium Ascorbate,
Potassium Citrate, Sodium Carbonate, Disodium Edetate, FD&C Blue

The Cloonan Corporation

1440 Grand Avenue, Suite D

Phone: (760) 891-0093

San Marcos, CA 92078

www.theanswer2oral.com

©2003 The Cloonan Corp U.S. Patent # 6,602,490









Damp wash cloth may be useful!

Moderate or Severe Limitations

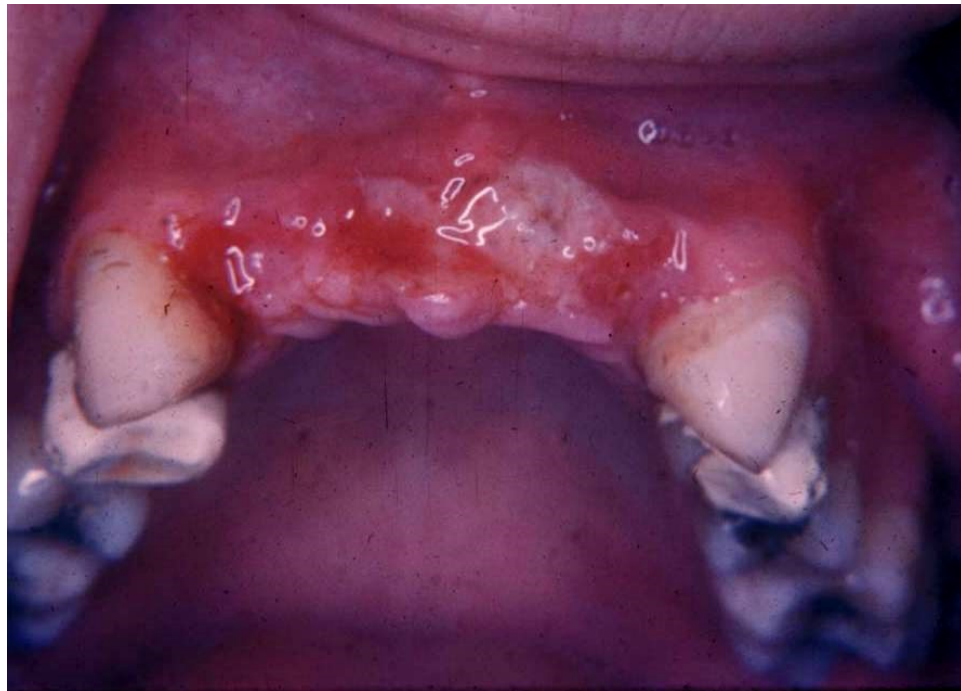
Moderate or Late Stage Dementia

- Have dental hygienist get mouth to baseline level
- Give resident a towel to hold
- Massage gums – gentle stimulation is soothing!
- Hum quietly, soothing brush brush brush
- Quietly sing a soft lullaby
- Brush hair

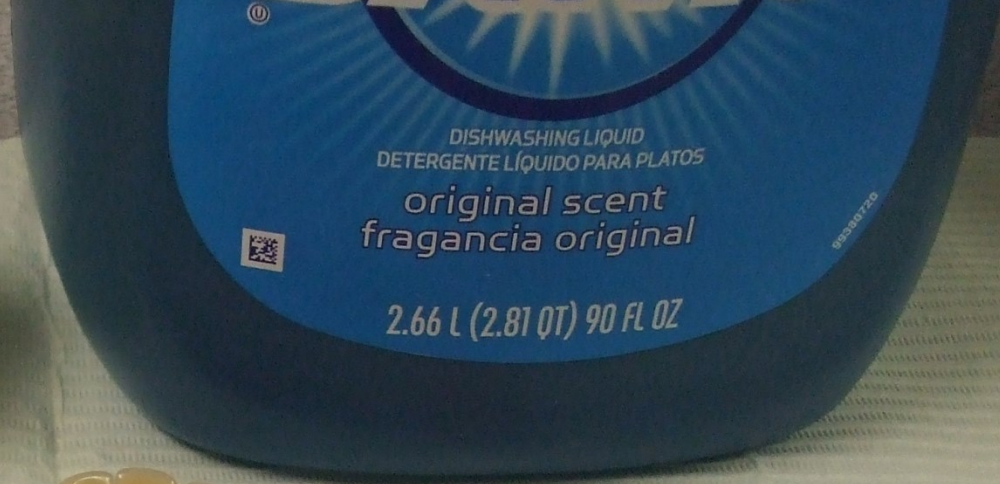


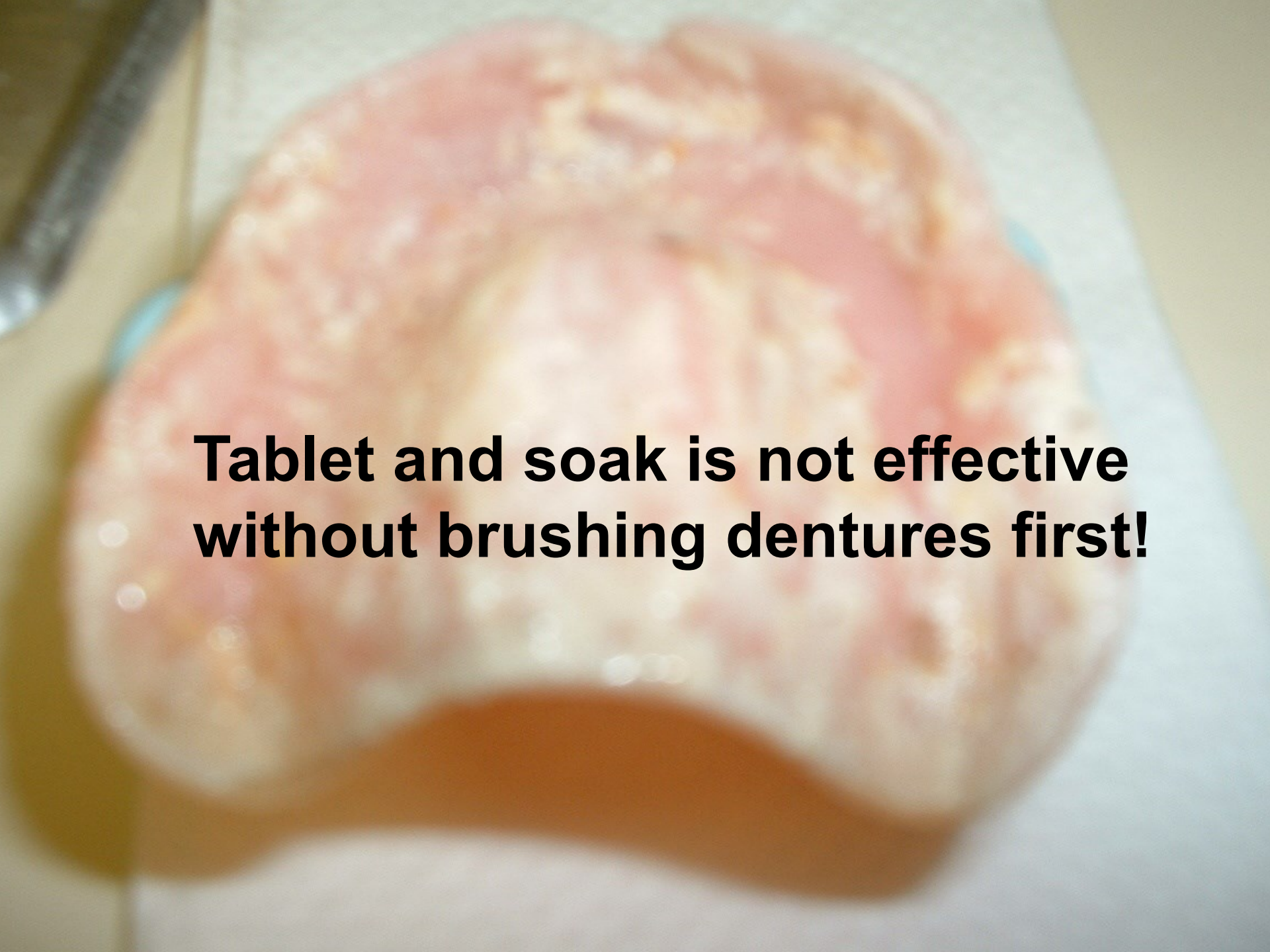
Topics

- Early Intervention & the Downward Spiral
- Daily Oral Care:
 - Basic Technique and Supplies
- Individualized Daily Oral Care
 - Special Tips and Techniques
- ***Denture Care***



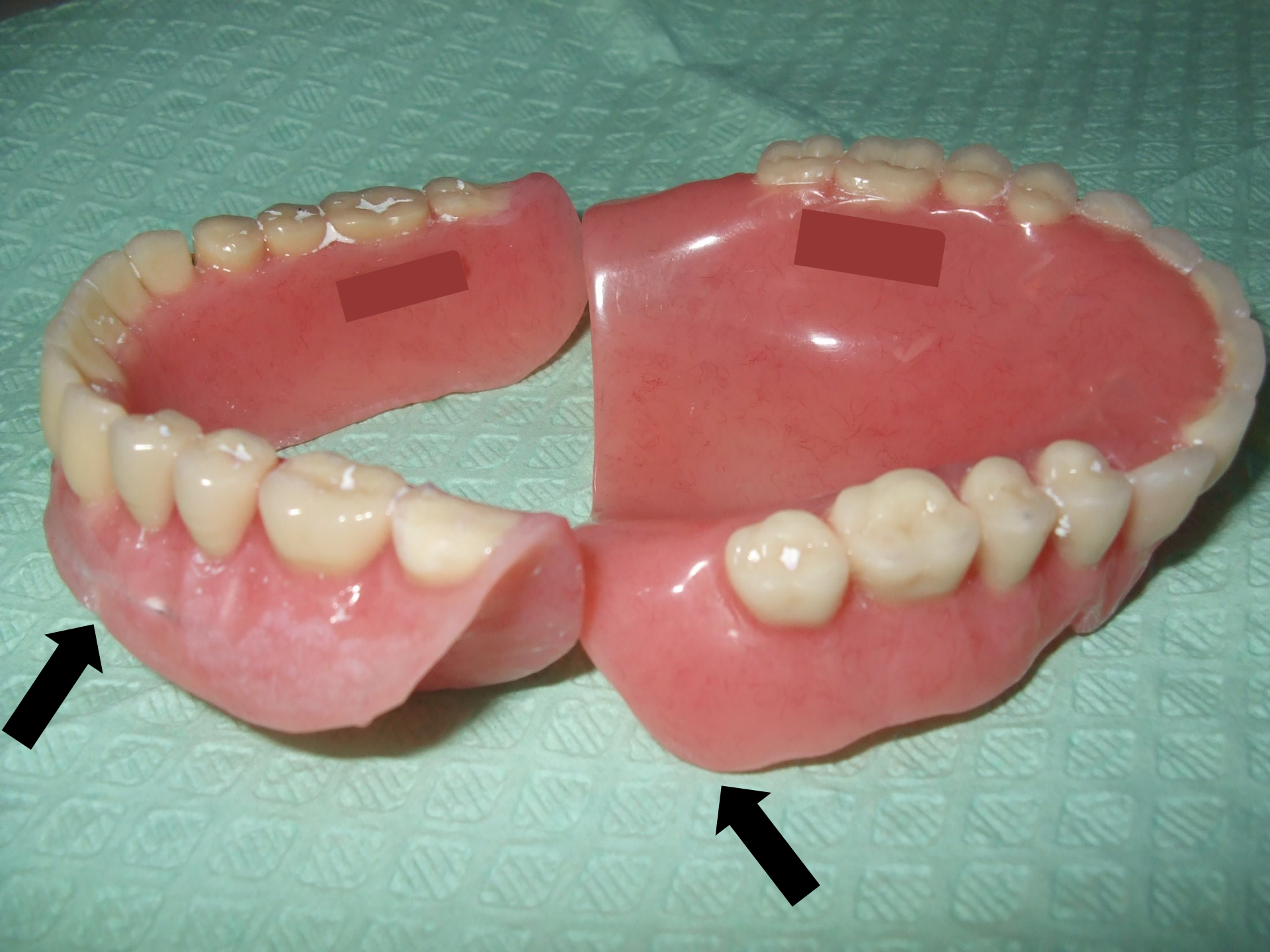
Remove dentures daily!





**Tablet and soak is not effective
without brushing dentures first!**







Report to dentist when dentures are not easily cleaned, have cracks or defects, and/or resident is not wearing dentures, or dentures are lost.











Topics

- Early Intervention & the Downward Spiral
- Daily Oral Care:
 - Basic Technique and Supplies
- Individualized Daily Oral Care
 - Tips and techniques
- Denture Care

Possible Strategies: Family Caregivers



- Use professional personal care services dedicated to oral care.
- Incorporate oral care during bath time
- Consider daily oral care as an “activity” to engage loved one
- Enlist periodic care from a mobile dental hygienist
- Get loved one to “baseline” level

Possible Strategies: Professional Caregivers



- Enlist the aid of a dental hygienist consultant
 - Get residents to “baseline level”
 - Recommend individualized daily care plan
 - Train CNA to be “daily oral care provider”
- Incorporate oral care during bath time
- Utilize OT and/or Speech pathology services in oral care plan

- Daily oral care of the frail elderly is a complex challenge.
- Solutions will require collaboration of
 - the dental community
 - the medical community
 - long-term care community





Sarah J. Dirks, DDS

7434 Louis Pasteur – Suite 234

San Antonio, Texas 78229

210-617-4446

www.geriatricdentalgroup.com