

# Let's Chew on This: Infection Prevention Practices while Providing Oral Care and Feeding Residents



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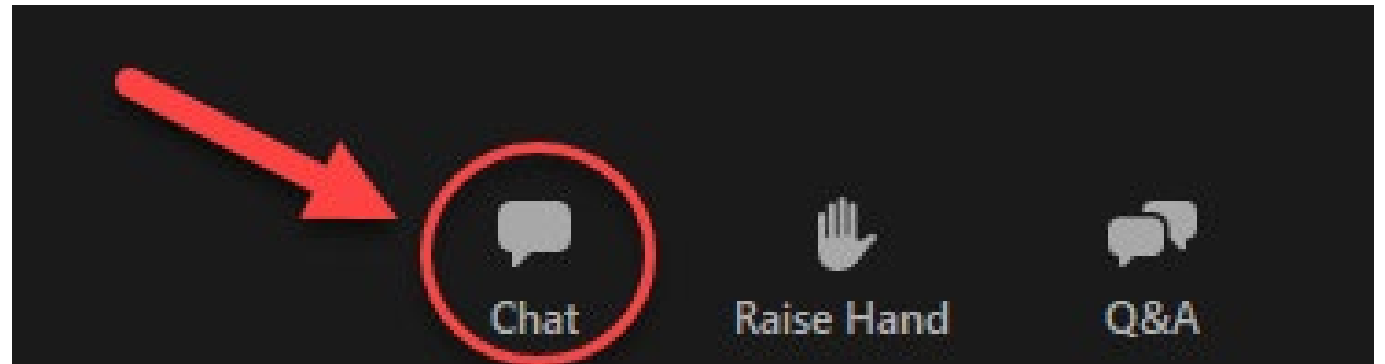
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**Project Firstline**  
Healthcare-Associated Infections Program  
Center for Health Care Quality  
California Department of Public Health



✓ Submit questions via Q&A

✓ Use the chat feature to participate in the discussion



# INFECTION PREVENTION STARTS WITH YOU!



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# Objectives

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- Review infection prevention principles and recommendations for oral care and feeding in skilled nursing facilities (SNFs)
  - Discuss the importance of oral care and proper feeding techniques
  - Identify infection prevention practices during oral care and feeding
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# Oral Care

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*As CNAs, what do you think is the most important reason to provide oral care to your residents?*



# Oral Care

**Oral care is the care of the mouth, teeth, and gums**

- Oral hygiene
- Infection prevention during oral care
  - Transmission and prevention
  - What to look for
- Toothbrush care
- Denture care



## Oral Care

- Good oral hygiene helps prevent multiple diseases
- Poor dental hygiene can make the following conditions worse:
  - Cardiovascular disease
  - Diabetes
  - Malnutrition
  - Infections
  - Pneumonia





# Infection Transmission and Prevention

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**The mouth can spread potentially infectious fluids and secretions**

- Herpes simplex virus, Strep throat, pneumonia mononucleosis, influenza, pneumonia

**Infection prevention while performing oral care with residents**

- Standard precautions, hand hygiene, proper personal protective equipment (PPE) use

# PPE During Oral Care

- Gloves
  - Possible contact with blood or body fluids, mucous membranes, non-intact skin
- Gowns
  - Protect skin and clothing during procedures or activities where contact with blood or body fluids is anticipated
- Mouth, nose, and eye protection
  - During procedures that are likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood or other body fluids

**Wash your hands before putting on your PPE and after taking off your PPE.**



# Infection Prevention While Brushing

- To lessen the risk of aspiration:
  - Perform hand hygiene
  - Sit resident up at least 45°
    - Always follow your facility's policy
  - Use a small amount of toothpaste
  - Have resident rinse and spit after brushing
    - If resident is unable, suction saliva and toothpaste from the mouth



A pea-sized amount of toothpaste is plenty!

# Toothbrush Care

- Rinse with tap water until clean
- Air-dry
- Store upright
- Avoid soaking or devices to clean the brush
- Avoid covering
- Replace every 3 to 4 months



## Denture Care

- Remove at night
- Brush before placing into a cup of water
- Rinse and brush again before putting back in the mouth
- Always keep in water when not in the mouth



# Dry Mouth

- More than 70 % of adults aged 65 and older have severe periodontal (gum) disease!

-Centers for Disease Control

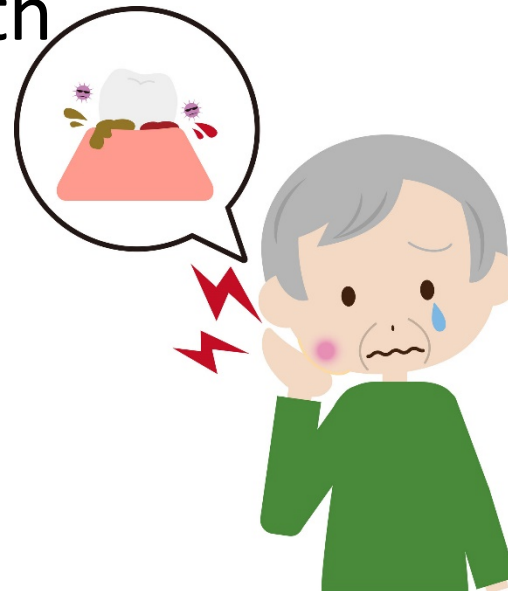
## Dry mouth can lead to:

- Periodontal (gum) disease
- Malnutrition
- Halitosis
- Infection



# What Does an Oral Infection Look Like?

- Toothache
- Sensitivity to hot or cold
- Unusual bad breath
- Bitter taste in mouth
- Fever
- Pain
- Swollen or bleeding gums
- Any changes in color or appearance of lumps on your tongue, cheeks, gums, or palate
- Unusually dry mouth



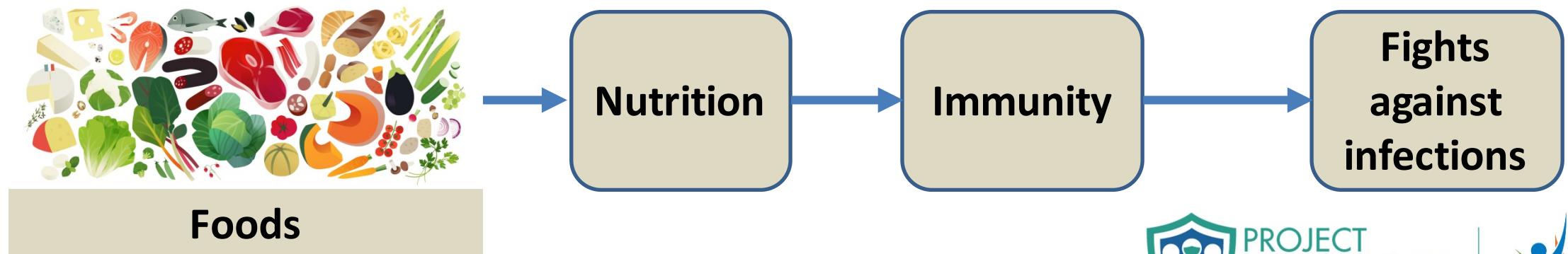
**FEEDING**





# Prevent Infections From Getting Worse with Proper Nutrition

- **Feeding** is a way of delivering **nutrition** and **hydration** to another person.
- **Nutrition/Hydration:**
  - Prevent infections by boosting immune system
  - Prevents malnutrition due to medications



# Preventing Aspiration Events

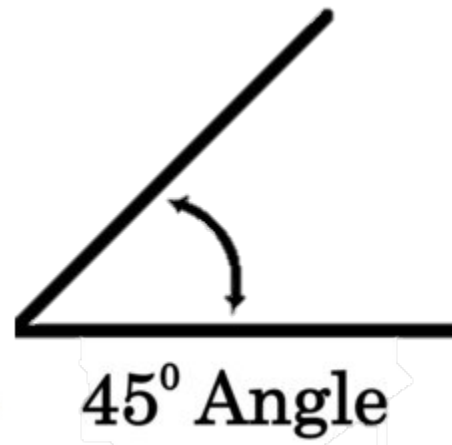
## Before and after oral feeding:

- Keep bed elevated to at least  $45^{\circ}$
- Always follow facility policy



## During oral feeding:

- Allow plenty of time to chew foods completely
- Alternate giving solid and liquid foods
- Monitor for swallowing difficulties



# Difficulty with Swallowing Food

**Swallowing difficulty** increases the risk of respiratory infections

## Monitor for signs of swallowing difficulty:

- Coughing or choking
- Unwillingness to eat or eating slowly
- Visibly struggling to chew foods
- Dribbling of saliva or food

*Report it to the nurse immediately!*



# Infection Prevention Practices While Feeding

- Check and maintain the temperature of the food
- **Perform hand hygiene** before feeding
- **Wear gloves**, if necessary
- After feeding, **clean** the area where tray was kept
- Remove the towel, food tray, and utensils
- Discard the gloves and **perform hand hygiene again**
- Chart the intake



# Infection Prevention Practices: Scenario

A CNA feeds two residents in a room.

What infection prevention practice should this CNA follow immediately after feeding the first resident?



Next slide has the answer

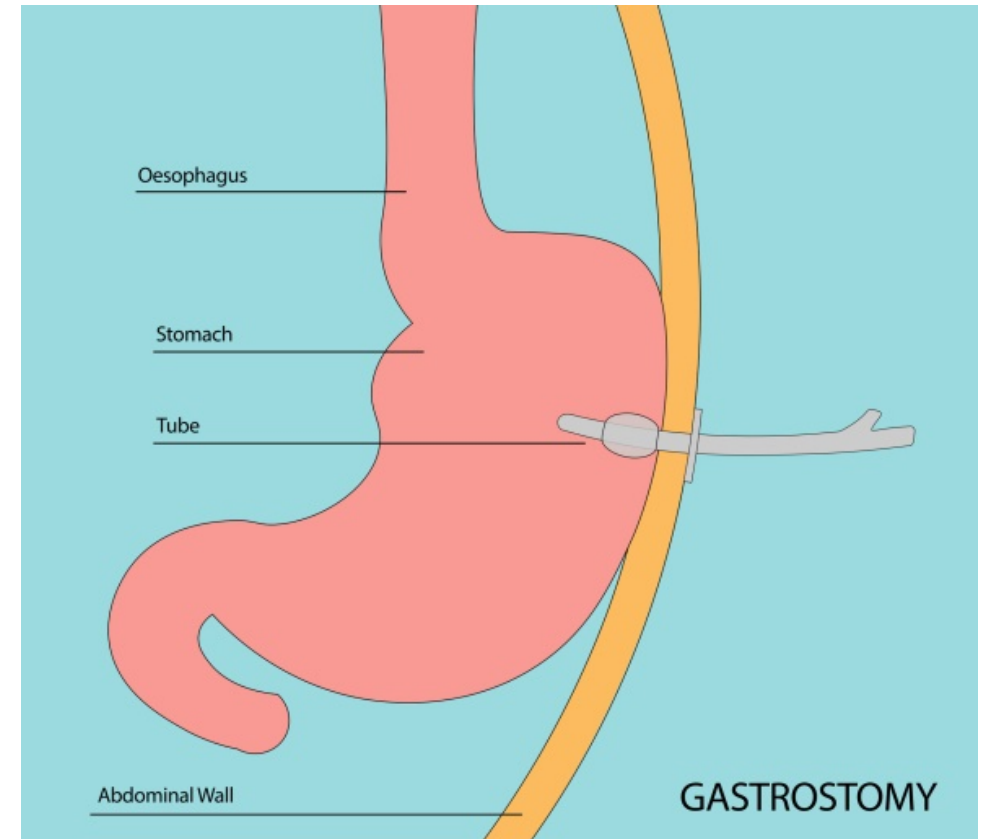


# Infection Prevention Practices: Scenario Continued

The CNA should perform hand hygiene between caring for each of the residents!



# TUBE FEEDING (ENTERAL NUTRITION)



# Complications That Can Lead to Infection

- Aspiration
- Tube pulled out of place
- Infection of the insertion site

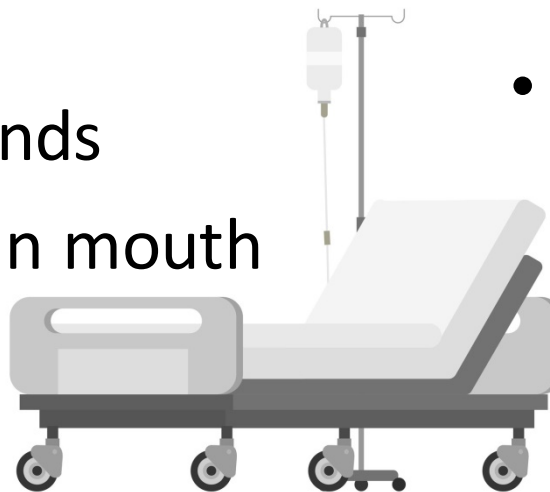
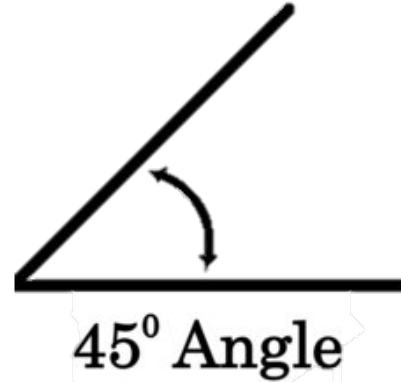




# Recognizing and Preventing Aspiration

## Signs and Symptoms

- Vital sign changes
  - Rapid breathing
  - Change in blood pressure
  - Rapid heart rate
- “Gurgling” or choking sounds
- Presence of tube feeding in mouth



## Prevention Practices

- Keep head of the bed elevated to at least 45°
- Remain in this position for at least 30 minutes after feeding
- Always be aware of who is at risk and never leave them alone when eating

# Recognizing and Preventing Insertion-Site Infection

## Signs and Symptoms

- Inflammation or redness around the insertion site
- Thick or foul-smelling discharge
- Pain or discomfort and fever



## Prevention Practices

- Verify tube integrity and secure tubes when repositioning
- Perform hand hygiene and wear gloves
- Never reinsert a tube that becomes dislodged
- Follow bathing procedures
- Ensure dressings remain clean and dry

# Summary

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- Good oral care helps prevent spread of infection
  - Perform hand hygiene before and after oral care
  - Keep feeding tubes secure and insertion sites clean to prevent infection
  - Elevate the head of the bed to at least 45° during feeding to prevent aspiration pneumonia
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# References

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(www.cdc.gov/nchs/nnhs/nnhs\_products.htm)



## Questions?

For more information, contact  
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