

Health and Welfare Alert



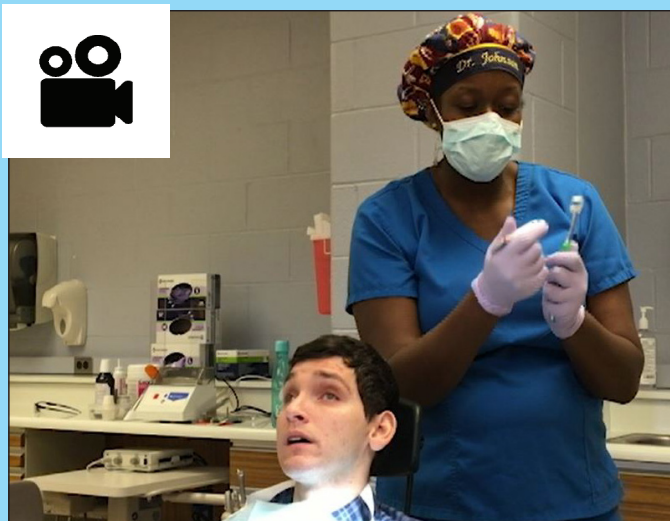
Ohio Administrative Code 5123:2-17-02 requires all developmental disabilities employees to review Health and Welfare Alerts released by the department as part of annual training. All previous alerts are listed on the department's website.

Dental Care #59-12-17

Taking good care of mouth, teeth, and gums is critical to a person's overall health. Good oral hygiene can help prevent bad breath, tooth decay, and gum disease and can help keep teeth healthy.

In general, people with developmental disabilities struggle to maintain good oral health and hygiene. According to a 2014 study by the American Dental Association, people with developmental disabilities have a high prevalence of cavities, gum disease, and tooth loss.

The study noted 85 percent of adults with developmental disabilities received assistance with teeth cleaning. It also found 63 percent of caregivers reported that behavioral problems interfered with oral health care routines more than any other factor.



VIDEO: Dr. Danielle Johnson-Curry, dental director at Ohio State University Nisonger Center, explains helpful positioning techniques while assisting Jacob from Franklin County to brush his teeth.

Terms to Know

Decay – This is the destruction of tooth enamel, which is the hard, outer layer of teeth. Bacteria in the mouth use sugar from foods and drinks to produce acids that dissolve and damage the teeth. Repeated acid attacks make cavities grow bigger.

Gingivitis – Irritated, red, swollen gums bleed easily. It is reversible.

Gum Disease (Periodontal Disease) – Untreated gingivitis can advance to periodontal disease. Tissues and bone that support the teeth are broken down and destroyed. It is irreversible.

Plaque – Sticky film of bacteria on teeth can contribute to tooth decay and gum disease.

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Steps to a Healthy Mouth

These are general guidelines about dental care. Check the person-centered plan for the person you support about their dental routine.

Timeline

Brush teeth twice daily

Brush tongue twice daily

Floss teeth once daily

Visit the dentist every six months

Tips

Use a soft bristle toothbrush

Use pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste

Brush teeth in a circular motion from the gums to teeth

Replace the toothbrush at least every 3 months

If using an electric toothbrush, introduce gradually into routine

National Core Indicators Survey "Had a Dental Exam in the Past Year"



14,558
people

81%

National Average



419
people

80%

Ohio

SOURCE: NCI Adult Consumer Survey State Results: 2015-16

About 20 percent of Ohioans who were interviewed had not seen a dentist in the past year, according to the 2015-16 National Core Indicators Adult Consumer Survey.

Some significant barriers for access to dental care include

- **Funding** – Medicaid will generally only pay for one dental cleaning visit per year for people age 21 and older, and two dental cleanings per year for those younger than

21. However, most dentists recommend cleanings two times per year.

- **Access to quality care** – Some dentists might not have experience treating people with disabilities.

- **Transportation** – Getting to and from the dentist might be difficult for some people.

- **Fear** – People might have fears about going to the dentist or anticipate a painful experience.



Check out [this video](#) from Dr. Johnson-Curry about daily tips to follow for good oral hygiene.