



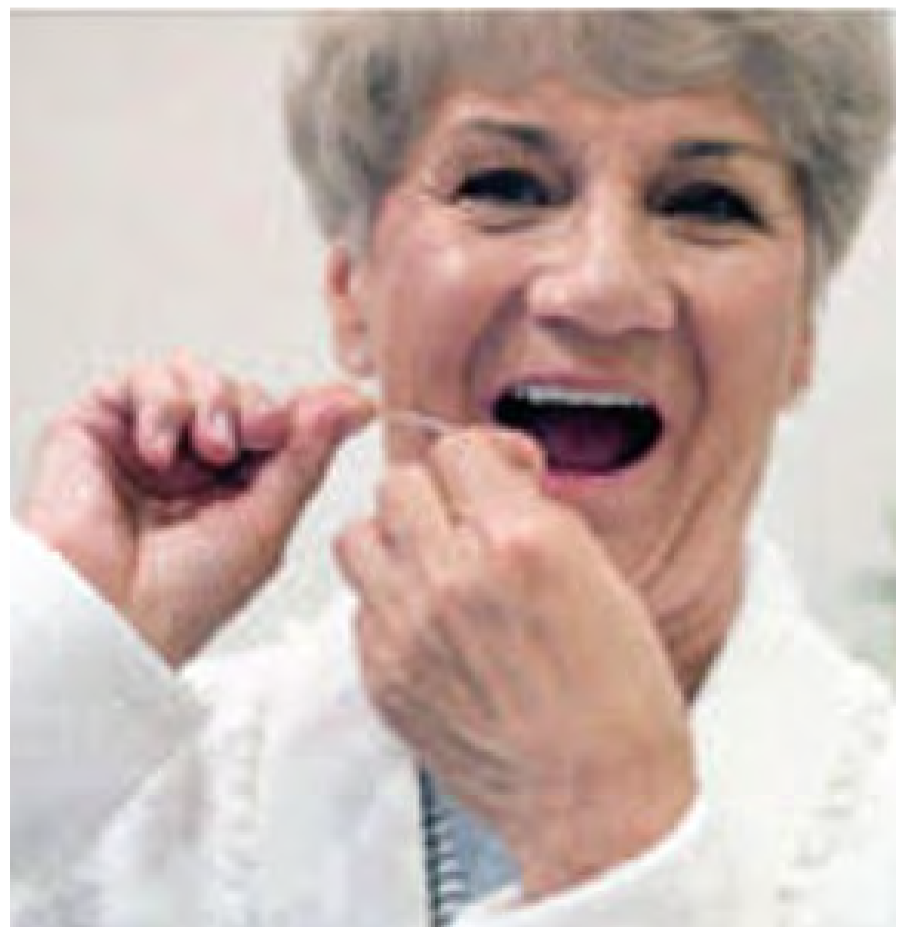
Introduction to Oral Cares

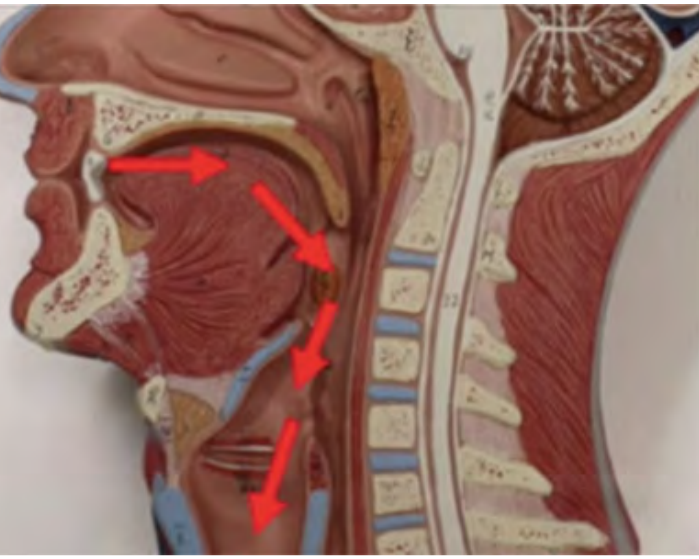
Introduction to Oral Care

Oral cares are the processes and tasks undertaken to keep a person's mouth, teeth, gums, and tongue clean and healthy.

A poor oral care routine may lead to reduced overall oral health, consequently decreasing taste and sensation and increasing oral pain and discomfort. Progressively, these changes can reduce oral intake, and impact on an individual's nutrition and health, wellbeing, and quality of life. Additionally, the risk of aspiration pneumonia may be increased.

A normal swallow requires a few mechanisms to take place in order to protect the airway and prevent ingested material from entering the lungs. The vocal folds close and the epiglottis tips over to block the entrance to the airway.





This directs the food, drink or saliva that is being swallowed down the oesophagus to the stomach, bypassing the trachea (windpipe) to the lungs.

In some circumstances ingested material may go down the wrong way. In this case our bodies are designed to eject the foreign material by coughing it up again.

However, when these protective mechanisms are not effective, materials in the mouth, like bacteria from poor oral care, can go down the trachea and into the lungs, increasing the risk of aspiration pneumonia.

Ongoing oral health care is therefore extremely important.

