



# Supporting People with Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD) in Brushing Their Teeth Every Day

People with IDD are at higher risk for dental issues such as tooth decay, gum disease, oral infections, and pain. This may cause behaviors like agitation (distress), self-injury, food refusal, and difficulty sleeping.



*Taking care of the mouth is an important part of staying healthy!*



**Can the person you support brush on their own? Watch their brushing habits and ask yourself:**

- Can they reach all areas of their mouth? And all of the teeth?
- Are they using proper brushing techniques?
- Can they be able to brush without swallowing the toothpaste?
- Are they willing to brush twice a day?

**If you answered 'No' to any of these questions,** then the person likely needs your help with proper brushing.

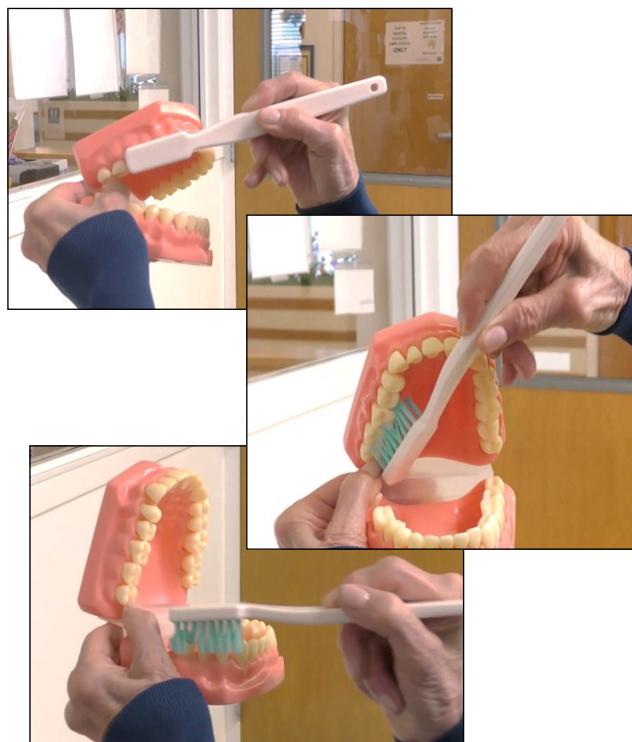
**Tip:** Ask the person to brush their teeth first, then you brush again. This ensures proper brushing and helps the person feel more comfortable.

**When you're ready to brush, follow these steps:**

- Wear a mask, gloves, and protective eye wear.
- Tell the person how you are going to brush.
- Brush the top and bottom teeth separately.
- Keep your fingers against the inside of the person's cheeks and lips to avoid accidentally being bit.
- Start at the upper right side of the mouth. Brush each tooth in small circles targeting the gumline.
- Brush the inside surfaces of the top teeth targeting the gumline.
- Brush back and forth on the chewing surfaces of the teeth. Brush others sides of the mouth.
- Gently brush the tongue from back to front.
- Ask the person to spit out and do not rinse.

**Tip:** If the person has challenging behavior, work with the PBS Qualified Clinician. They can help identify good strategies for supporting the person.

**Full Training Video:** <https://vimeo.com/1146072118/fe3e562896?>



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