Oral hygiene

Mouth care is very important for people with MND who have swallowing difficulties (MND Australia 2010).

MND Australia 2010

Immobility of the tongue decreases the natural ability to move food particles around the mouth. Food can become trapped in the cheek pockets and this can cause mouth ulceration.

The person’s mouth should be inspected each day for signs of oral thrush or ulcers. Teeth should be brushed carefully after meals. It is important to make sure that excess secretions do not collect in the mouth, as this can cause problems swallowing. It may be helpful to use an electric toothbrush.

Spitting out the foam from toothpaste can be very difficult when a person cannot spit due to muscle weakness. Biotene low foaming toothpaste reduces the need to clear foam from the mouth. Swabbing the mouth with a cotton wool bud soaked in bicarbonate of soda and water (half a teaspoon to a glass of water) will help keep the mouth clean.

Zoing 2007

Problems controlling saliva are a reminder that muscle control in the mouth is deteriorating, and this has implications for oral health. The importance of diligent regular mouth-care needs to be emphasised to patients and their carers to prevent oral infections such as candidiasis.