

THERE IS NO HEALTH WITHOUT GOOD ORAL HEALTH*

By Carol Van Aernam, RDH, BA

DENTURES: Removable replacements for all missing teeth.

PARTIALS: Removable replacements for several missing teeth, some teeth present.

Question: Why do dentures/partials have to be removed for at least 4 hours every night or day?

Answer:

- To give the tissues a rest and prevent sores, infection and bad breath.
- Remove food, debris and germs from the mouth.
- Reduce the risk for Aspiration Pneumonia.

Question: Are you supposed to use a toothbrush or just soak them in a cleaner?

Answer:

- Use a denture brush or toothbrush to clean the dentures/partials
- Soaking is not a substitute for brushing

Question: Can regular toothpaste be used to clean dentures/partials?

Answer:

- No, it can scratch the surface of the dentures/partials.
- Use Denture Toothpaste, hand soap or mild liquid dish soap.

Question: Do dentures/partials have to be soaked when not in the mouth?

Answer: Yes. It helps to keep their shape.

Question: What can be used to soak dentures/partials?

Answer:

- Commercial denture cleaners
- Fresh clean water, not hot water.

**Surgeon General, Report on Oral Health, 2000*

All health and long term service and support (LTSS) professionals/caregivers are expected to work within their Scopes of Practice or job descriptions as defined by the State or employer. Family caregivers are encouraged to contact the dental or medical provider before making changes to a loved one's care plan.

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Carol Van Aernam

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Meet Carol, a Registered Dental Hygienist and a Mouth Care Matters consultant and instructor.

Carol Van Aernam is a Mouth Care Matters (MCM) instructor and consultant for Iowa CareGivers. She plays a key role in planning, promoting, and teaching MCM. Carol worked in private dental practice for several years and 34 years for the Veterans Administration and Central Iowa Health Care System as a dental hygienist. She specializes in geriatric care and has presented programs at the local and national levels to those who work in direct care, dietitians, dentists, dental hygienists, and other caregivers. In addition, Carol served as an adjunct instructor for Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) and the University of Iowa.

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