

Stroke and oral health

Taking care of teeth and gums is important after a stroke.

Effects of stroke:

- dry mouth
- difficulty swallowing
- weak tongue muscles
- arm and hand weakness
- reduced feeling in your mouth
- weak face muscles.

The effects of stroke can impact your ability to clean your teeth and gums.

- It makes it harder to brush your teeth.
- It leads to a build-up of leftover food in your mouth.
- It increases the amount of acid that stays in your mouth that can lead to tooth decay and gum disease.

Getting Help

Speak to any health care provider about your oral health concerns. If this is not your dental practitioner, this could be your:

- GP
- Physio
- Speech Pathologist.

Ask them to refer you to a dental practitioner close to your home. Speaking up is the best way to address any oral health concern.

A healthy mouth

Improves:

- Sensation in your mouth
- Your speech
- Your general health.

Reduces your risk of:

- Pneumonia
- Gum disease and tooth decay

Tips

- Brush your teeth two times a day.
- Think about using an electronic toothbrush to make toothbrushing easier.
- Use low foaming toothpaste with fluoride.
- After brushing your teeth, remember to spit, not rinse.
- Use thicker handled toothbrush to help with grip.
- Stay hydrated, by drinking water throughout the day.
- Sit upright to eat and drink.
- Check your mouth after every meal for leftover food stuck inside.
- Have regular dental check-ups.
- People on modified diets should always follow advice from their speech pathologist.

Dental services in NSW

Public dental services are free for adults with one of the following Australian Government concession cards:

- Pensioner Concession Card
- Health Care Card
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card

To make a dental appointment with a public dental service, call: 1800 679 336.

They will ask for your Medicare card details. If you are an adult, you will also need your concession card details.

To find a private dentist go to Australian Dental Association - Find a Dentist
<https://www.adansw.com.au/Community/FindaDentist>