

Helping People with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) Improve their Oral Health

People with ID often have poor oral health. According to findings from nearly 1,500 adults with ID participating in The Arc's HealthMeet assessments, 35 percent had signs of oral health concerns, including infection, tooth grinding, and gingivitis. At least 25 percent had missing teeth.

There are many reasons people with ID may have poor oral health. **HOWEVER, YOU CAN HELP PEOPLE WITH ID IMPROVE THEIR ORAL HEALTH.**

Tips to help achieve better oral health:

MAKE BRUSHING EASIER

Consider placing molding putty around the handle of a toothbrush to make it easier to grip.

SET REMINDERS TO BRUSH TEETH

Set an alarm or leave a note in the bathroom as a reminder to brush teeth. You can also download an app using a smartphone that can set a daily reminder.

CUT OUT SODAS AND SNACKS

Making a diet change can help lower plaque and acidity levels that cause cavities or wear away enamel on teeth.

TAKE MEDICATION AT MEALS

Some medicines cause plaque build-up resulting in cavities. Taking medicine with meals or before brushing teeth means that plaque from the medicine does not sit on the teeth all night.

GET ADVICE FROM THE DENTIST

Being afraid of the dentist can make routine cleanings a traumatizing experience. Consider calling the dentist's office to explain fears and get suggestions on how to be more relaxed before and during the visit.

CONTACT THE ARC

There are many other reasons people with ID may not go to the dentist.

Call us at 1-800-433-5255 if you need help or if you have other questions or concerns.