

# Visiting the Dentist: A Caregiver's Guide

Daily cleaning and dental check-ups help maintain a healthy mouth. As a caregiver, you may need to bring the person you care for to the dentist's office. Here is what to expect on your first visit:

- a review of past and present medical problems
- a check-up of the head and neck areas, mouth and teeth
- x-rays of the teeth

## What do I bring?

- **Medical history form:** The dental office may send you a medical history form to complete before the appointment. Fill out the individual's medical problems, past surgeries, hospitalizations, medications, and any drug allergies. If they do not send you this form, you still will need to provide this information.
- **Medications:** Bring a written list of medications and medical problems. Or, you could bring the medications in a bag.
- A copy of a recent **physical examination** from their physician
- **Names and phone numbers** of all the individual's doctors and family members responsible for healthcare decisions

## Other Tips

- Bring a list of any dental concerns.
- Make sure you have accurate medical information. It can be difficult to get correct information from the individual, especially if they have dementia or Alzheimer's disease.
- Schedule an appointment at the individual's best time. Some people do better early in the morning, while others prefer later in the day. This will make the visit less stressful for everyone.
- Arrive early to the appointment.
- If the person you care for is in a wheelchair, confirm the dental office is wheelchair accessible. Offer to help transfer them from the wheelchair to the dental chair. If he or she cannot be moved out of the wheelchair, see if you can get a reclining wheelchair with a headrest for the dental visit.
- If there are medications taken for anxiety or nerves, schedule the appointment time right after that medication is normally given. They will be more relaxed during the appointment.

Daily mouth cleaning and routine visits to the dentist are important to keep the person you care for healthy.