



Oral Care

Digestion Starts in the Mouth

Older adults can develop tooth decay, particularly if they have receding gums or if they have old fillings that develop cracks and crevices where new cavities can form. What's unhealthy for your body is also unhealthy for your mouth. When we eat foods that are high in sugar – as well as starchy foods that get broken down into sugar – the bacteria in your mouth can change those sugars into acids that slowly eat away at your enamel, causing a hole in your tooth. The foods you eat and the way you clean your teeth are the two most important factors influencing whether or not you have cavities. Limit your intake of sugary foods and beverages, and brush at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. It is important to see a dentist regularly – ideally, every six months – so she can check for the first sign of tooth decay.

Contact your local dental society to find the names of professionals who have experience working with people with dementia or with elderly patients. Watch for signs of tooth pain, especially when the person in your care is eating hot or cold foods. Dry mouth as a side effect of a medication may cause tooth decay.

Gum Disease

While poor oral hygiene is a prime cause of gum disease, other risk factors are smoking and diabetes. The first sign of gum trouble is red, swollen gums or gums that bleed after brushing. Brushing twice a day with a soft toothbrush and flossing is also important to scrape the plaque off the spaces between the teeth.



Keeping the Mouth Fresh and Clean

Oral care includes cleansing the mouth and gums and the teeth or dentures. While daily dental hygiene is important, it can cause anxiety in some elderly people. To help reduce anxiety, always be patient and explain what you are about to do. When a person refuses to brush his teeth, encourage him to swish and spit out a mouth-wash rinse.

Steps to Providing Oral Care

1. Gather supplies – latex gloves, a soft toothbrush, toothpaste, baking soda, warm water in a glass, dental floss, and a bowl.
2. Bring the person to an upright position.
3. Encourage the person to clean his own teeth twice daily and after meals.
4. Be sure the person can spit out water before allowing him to sip it. Use a water glass for rinsing.
5. If necessary, ask the person to open his mouth and gently brush the front and back teeth up and down.
6. Rinse well by having him sip water and spit into a bowl.

Oral Injuries/Teeth

A person with a mouth injury may have knocked-out teeth, broken or loose teeth. This can be a choking hazard. If you suspect an oral injury, immediately take these steps:

1. Put on gloves.
2. Check the mouth for loose teeth, broken teeth or any missing teeth.
3. Rinse the mouth with clean water or saline.
4. If a loose tooth, have the person bite down on a piece of gauze to keep the tooth in place and call the dentist.
5. If tooth is chipped, clean the injured area and call a dentist
6. If tooth is missing, apply gauze with pressure to stop the bleeding from the empty tooth socket
7. If tooth has come out, place the tooth in clean water or cup of milk and immediately take the person and tooth to a dentist.
8. Whenever you handle the tooth, it is important to hold the top part or the tooth (the crown) and avoid touching the root of the tooth which may have ligaments on the tooth that will help reattach the tooth.

Denture Cleaning

- ♦ Remove the dentures from the mouth and run them under water and soak them in a cleaner in a denture cup.
- ♦ Rinse the person's mouth with water or mouthwash and stimulate the gums with a very soft brush.
- ♦ Return the dentures to the person's mouth.



Note

Loss of appetite may be a sign of mouth pain or ill fitting-dentures. Even a person with dentures should regularly visit the dentist to check the soft tissues of the mouth.

Local Resources

Monterey County

MONTEREY BAY DENTAL SOCIETY

8 Harris Court, Suite A2
Monterey, CA 93940
(831) 658-0168
<http://mbdsdentist.com/>

San Benito County

SAN BENITO HEALTH FOUNDATION - DENTAL DEPARTMENT

351 Felice Drive
Hollister, CA 95023
831-637-5306
www.sanbenitohealth.org/dentaldepartment

Santa Cruz County

CABRILLO COLLEGE DENTAL HYGIENE CLINIC

6500 Soquel Drive, HW2000
Aptos, CA 95003
479-6431
www.cabrillo.edu/academics/dentalhygiene/clinic

DIENTES COMMUNITY DENTAL CLINIC

1830 Commercial Way
Santa Cruz, CA 95065
464-5409

Watsonville Health and Dental Center
1430 Freedom Blvd., Suite C
Watsonville 95076
621-2560
www.dientes.org

Dementia Oral Care Tip



Good oral hygiene can be a challenge for individuals with Alzheimer's or dementia because of the person's inability to understand and accept help. Use a mirroring technique by holding a brush and show the person how to brush her teeth by copying you.

Taking Care of Yourself: Alzheimer's Burnout

Often caregivers are not even aware that they are suffering from burnout until a friend or family member points out that they are not themselves. Caregivers can underestimate the impact of the work they are doing and the time and emotional energy they are using. Try not to be offended, but listen if you are told that you are more irritable than usual, seem to be losing your temper with the person you are caring for, and do not appear to be doing well.

Burnout may have some of the same symptoms as depression but is not the same and cannot be helped with medication. Burnout may explain your loss of interest in activities you used to enjoy, your run-down condition, feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, even wanting to hurt yourself or the person you are caring for. If you have these feelings it is time to re-evaluate your caregiving situation. You should take steps to get more support and relief from the constant responsibility and stress of caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease.

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Valley Patient Care

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CAREGIVER UNIVERSITY



*A Day of Learning
and Sharing*

CONFERENCE

Workshop topics include:

- Navigating Caregiver Resources
- Understanding Dementia and Managing Aggressive Behaviors
- From Surviving to Thriving with Caregiver Stress
- Care and Compassion When Caring for Someone Near Life's End
- Estate Planning and the Recovery Act
- Balancing Caregiving and Setting Boundaries

Saturday, April 8

9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Northminster Presbyterian Church
315 E Alive Drive, Salinas

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

FREE lunch and resource fair!

**Seating is limited.
Please register early.**

Presented By:



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Valley Patient Care



Peggy's Home Care



Like us on Facebook!

Follow our Facebook page for weekly updates on upcoming caregiver workshops, articles on caregiving-related issues, and upcoming events from other non-profit agencies in San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Monterey Counties.

Link:

www.facebook.com/healthprojectscenter

For information on **upcoming events** and **news** for caregivers visit the Del Mar Caregiver Resource

Center's website at: **www.delmarcaregiver.org**



Includes:

Caregiver News Blog

Online Registration for Events

Fact Sheets

Support Group Lists

Online and Community Resources

Caring for Caregivers Annual Fund Drive

Thanks to our annual fund drive donors:

*Ellen Murtha
Brian Scholz
Melanie Rager
Lynn Wagner*

Money raised in our annual fund drive goes a long way to help caregivers receive much needed support!



Thank You for Helping Us Help Others

We would like to express our sincere thanks to our donors. Your contribution helps us to help more families.



Health Projects Center extends heartfelt thanks for the generous support of the following funders:

California Department of Health Care Services
Community Foundation for San Benito County
Community Foundation for Monterey County
Stephen and Madeleine Conran Fund and the Margaret L. Musser Field of Interest Fund of the Community Foundation for Monterey County

Monterey County Area Agency on Aging
Monterey Peninsula Foundation, host of the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am.

These grant contributions help ensure the continuation of HPC educational programs and support services for caregivers.

CAREGIVER UNIVERSITY



*A Time for Learning
and Sharing*

WORKSHOPS

Free Upcoming Caregiver Workshops

Understanding Alzheimer's Disease and Related Neurocognitive Disorders

Presented by Sam Trevino, LCSW

Wednesday, March 15, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Alzheimer's Association, 21 Lower Ragsdale Drive, Suite E, Monterey

Caregiver Compassion Circle Support Group: Spark Your Creativity

Facilitated by Meggie Pina, Family Consultant

Wednesday, April 5, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Health Projects Center Office, 1537 Pacific Avenue, Suite 300, Santa Cruz

Managing Stress: Learning to Transform Negative Thoughts into Positive Actions When Caregiving

Facilitated by Meggie Pina, Family Consultant

Thursday, April 13, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Highlands Park Senior Center, 8500 CA-9, Ben Lomond

For full class descriptions, please visit www.delmarcaregiver.org/upcoming-workshops

To register:

831-459-6639 or

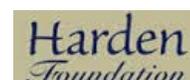
www.delmarcaregiver.org

Presented By:



DEL MAR CAREGIVER RESOURCE CENTER
A program of Health Projects Center

Sponsors:



Fragrance-free event. As a courtesy to those affected, please attend smoke and scent free.

Caregiver Support Groups

Sponsored by Del Mar Caregiver Resource Center:

Caring for a Spouse or Life Partner Caregiver Support Group

When: 2nd Tuesday of every month, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Where: 1537 Pacific Avenue, Suite 300, Santa Cruz

Facilitator: Staff of Health Projects Center

For information, call (831) 459-6639

Caregiver Support & Education Group - In Spanish

When: 2nd Monday of every month, 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Where: Quadrangle Building, 1000 South Main Street, Room 302, Salinas

Facilitator: Yuliana Mendoza, Family Consultant, Del Mar Caregiver Resource Center

Co-sponsors: Del Mar CRC & Alzheimer's Association

For information, please call (831) 424-4359

Early Stage Alzheimer's Group

Early Stage Alzheimer's Group

When: Tuesdays, call for times

Where: Santa Cruz, call for location

Facilitator: Alzheimer's Association

Sponsors: Del Mar CRC, Alzheimer's Assn. Groups are held in 8-week sessions. Not a drop-in, please call to register.

For information, please call (800) 272-3900

More information about support groups can be found on our website:

www.delmarcaregiver.org/support-groups



Additional support groups are offered through other agencies.

Alzheimer's Association:

Monterey - 800-272-3900

Santa Cruz/San Benito - 800-272-3900

Cabrillo College Stroke & Disability Learning Center: Santa Cruz - 831-425-0622

Central Coast Center for Independent Living: Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz - 831-462-8720

Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula: Monterey - 831-625-4606

Dominican Hospital: Santa Cruz - 831-462-7700

Hospice of Santa Cruz County - 831-430-3078

Jovenes de Antaño: San Benito - 831-637-9275

First United Methodist Church: Watsonville - 831-662-3170

Twin Lakes Church: Aptos - 831 465 3368



If you can't attend a support group in person, the Alzheimer's Association offers Telephone Support

Groups. Free and no phone charges.

For more information call the Alzheimer's Association's Monterey office at 800-272-3900

Memory Impairment Caregivers Support Group

When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:00-7:30 pm

Where: Hollister Community Center
300 West Street, Hollister

Facilitator: Christina Andrade, Family Consultant

Sponsors: Del Mar CRC, Jovenes de Antaño

For information, please call (831) 637-9275



Health Projects Center
Del Mar Caregiver Resource Center
 1537 Pacific Avenue, Suite 300
 Santa Cruz, CA 95060

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Current Resident or:

**Health Projects Center's
 Del Mar Caregiver Resource
 Center is here to meet the needs
 of family caregivers and the
 health professionals who serve
 them.**

For more information about free
 and low cost services for caregivers
 of people with brain impairment
 please contact:

Health Projects Center
 1537 Pacific Avenue, Suite 300
 Santa Cruz, CA 95060
 831-459-6639

Or visit us online at
www.hpcn.org



Safety Tips: Reduce the Chance of Wandering

Caregivers can do things to reduce the chance that a person with Alzheimer's will wander such as:

- Provide opportunities for exercise.
- Camouflage doors by painting exit doors the same color as the walls.
- Install electronic alarms or chimes on windows and doors.
- Place a full-length mirror on doors to the outside. Some people will turn around when they see the image.
- Monitor medication changes, especially anti-depressants as they may be making the person agitated and increasing the risk of wandering.
- Determine whether wandering is related to previous lifestyles. (Did the person always react to an argument by going out and walking for an hour? Did he always jog in the afternoon?)
- Have a plan of action if wandering occurs and keep a photo on hand to give the police if an incident occurs.

**NOTE: ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION SAFE RETURN® IS A 24-HOUR
 NATIONWIDE EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICE. VISIT WWW.ALZ.ORG
 FOR MORE INFORMATION.**