

# DENTAL WORKSHEET

Dental care is an integral part of living well with Parkinson's. Regular dental care can minimize your risk of experiencing pain and discomfort, but most importantly, it can reduce the risk of infection, which can be a significant stressor on the body when coupled with Parkinson's-related challenges.

## Dietary Changes

- Choose a nutritious snack between meals like cheese, milk, plain yogurt, fruits, vegetables or nuts. Sugary snacks (like candy), soda and sticky food (like dried fruits) can put you at risk for cavities and other oral health problems.
- Citrus fruits and other acidic foods (like oranges, tomatoes and red meat) should be eaten as *part* of a meal instead of separately, since the acidity of these foods can have a negative effect on tooth enamel.
- Talk with your primary care physician about including cheese, milk, calcium-fortified tofu, leafy greens, almonds, meat, poultry, fish and eggs in meals. These have high calcium, nutrient and phosphorus levels and may assist in dental health but prevent medication absorption.
- Drink your daily intake of fluids to avoid dehydration and dry mouth.

## Lifestyle Changes

- Schedule tooth brushing around medication "on" times.
- Replace your toothbrush or toothbrush bristles every 3-4 months, after you've been sick or when it starts to show signs of wear such as frayed bristles.
- Brush your teeth three times a day or after each meal for two minutes to remove sugars and food particles from your teeth.
- Floss daily. Instruments like a flossing proxy brush can help ease the process, or a care partner can assist.
- Use moisturizing mouth spray, non-alcohol based mouthwash, a fluoride rinse or oral swab brushes daily if you experience dry mouth or inflammation (common Parkinson's medication side effects).
- Use a wide handle toothbrush or add an adaptive device to facilitate easier grip on the toothbrush handle.
- Consider an electric, ultrasonic or specialty toothbrush to maximize brushing benefits.

## EVERY VICTORY COUNTS

- ▶  Ask your dentist about using a biteguard if you have bruxism (grinding of teeth).
- Ask your dentist about prescription strength, topical stannous fluoride gel treatments and toothpastes, as these can be good preventative strategies.

### **Treatments**

- Visit your dentist every 6 months for regular, short (45 minutes or less) check-ups.
- Complete the “Daily Medication Log” in this section, and bring it to your dental visit to address important risks of medication interactions during your dental appointment. Anesthesia and novocaine can cause increased sedation, imbalance or confusion.
- Schedule your appointments during your medications “on” time and when your dyskinesia is not generally bothersome.
- Ask to keep the dentist chair 45° incline or higher to enable comfortable swallowing.
- Request frequent suctioning to assist with saliva production and muscle weakness.
- Have your dentist or care partner assist you in and out of the dental chair to reduce the risk of a fall.
- Include your dentist in your wellness team, making sure they have an understanding of how Parkinson’s disease may affect your oral health.
- Collaborate with your dentist to determine a signal for discomfort; for example, put your hand up to signal you need a break or are having trouble swallowing.