

Oral Hygiene Guide For Parents With Children With Autism

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ABSTRACT

Maintaining good oral health is crucial to the well-being of any individual. However, for children with autism, practicing good oral hygiene habits can be challenging. Providing a guide with comprehensive instructions to the families can assist in helping their children embark on this positive oral health care journey.

We will examine and explain components of a comprehensive guide that may be useful as reference for parents of autistic children in their day-to-day oral health activities.

INTRODUCTION

Autism is a complex developmental disability that impairs communication and social, behavioral, and intellectual functioning.

Providing oral care to children with autism requires adaptation of the skills you use every day. Using a "tell-show-do" approach to providing care helps. Familiarize them with the tools such as the brush or floss you will use and how they work. Demonstrations can encourage some patients to be more cooperative.

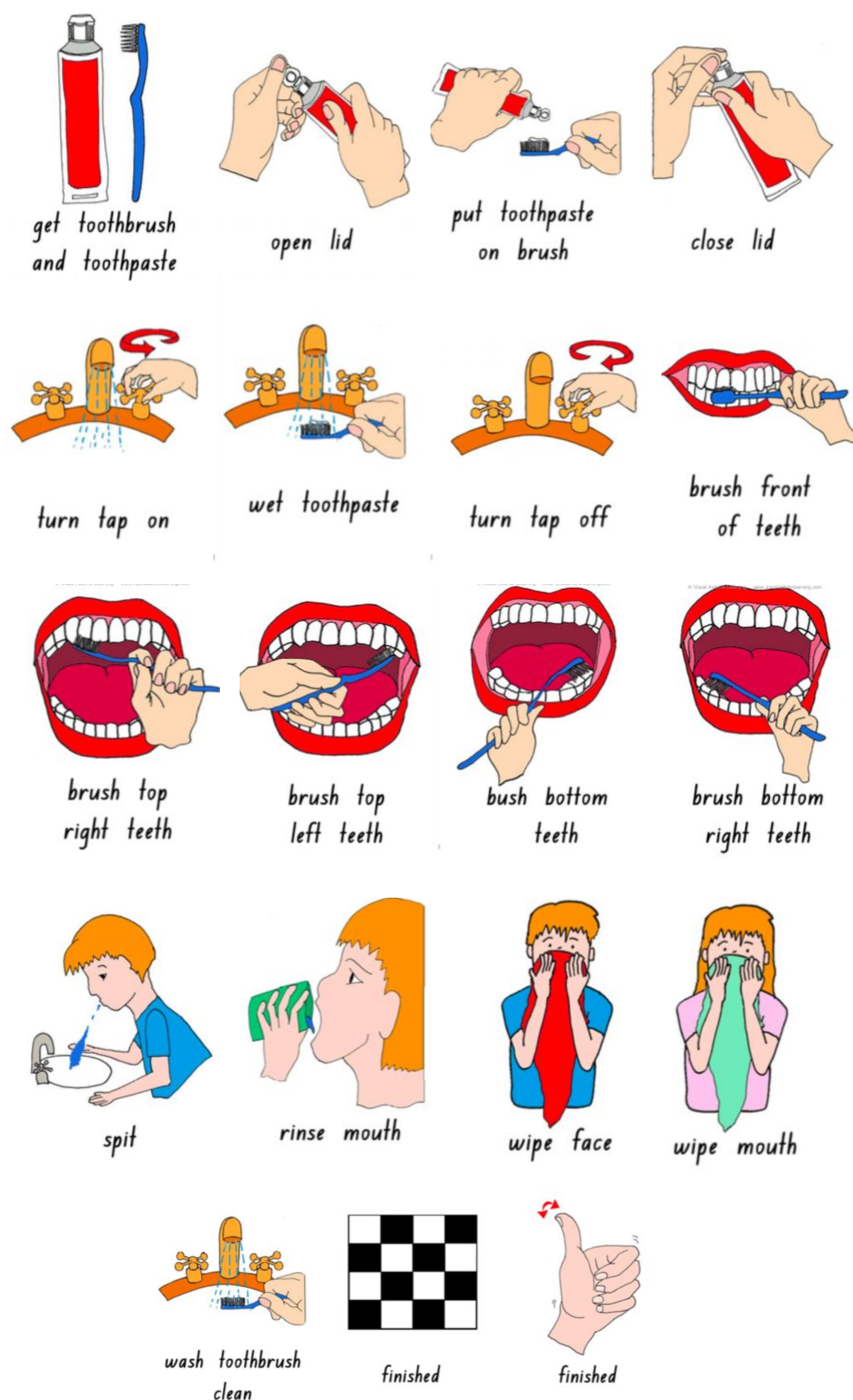
Some individuals with autism benefit from visual supports. Families can print pictures of brush and flossing techniques and create visual schedules for their child. The photos are arranged in chronological order on a board, and as each step is completed, the corresponding picture is removed.

Positive reinforcement helps in building strong habits that may persist for a lifetime. In all cases, the ultimate goal is for the individual with Autism to brush their teeth as independently as possible.

PURPOSE

For children with autism practicing oral hygiene habits can be challenging. Through this guide we hope to provide comprehensive instructions to families in helping their children embark on this oral health care journey.

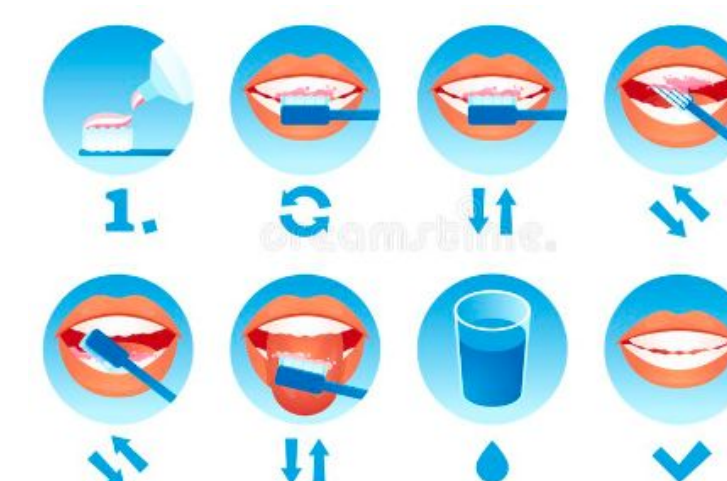
VISUAL AID GUIDE FOR PATIENTS



BRUSHING AND FLOSSING TECHNIQUES

Brushing

- Make brushing exciting and fun, let your child pick their own toothbrush
- Establish a routine and follow it consistently
- Some children learn very well by imitation; brush your teeth at the same time
- Visual pictures provided in this guide are helpful
- Put a pea size amount of toothpaste on the center of the brush
- Stand behind your child with their head on your chest
- Guide the brush as if you were brushing your own teeth
- Brush teeth in a sequence.
 1. Start from back teeth on right side, move to front teeth, followed by back teeth on left side
 2. Finish brushing upper teeth and then move to brushing bottom teeth
 3. Brush inside, outside and on the chewing surfaces of teeth
 4. Brush each surface at least 5 times
- Praise your child for their success at each step
- As the child demonstrates independence, physical assistance, visual support and verbal commands should be gradually withdrawn
- Once the child is comfortable with a manual toothbrush, then an electric brush can be introduced



Courtesy: www.dreamstime.com/illustration/how-to-brush-teeth.html

Flossing

- Just like brushing, flossing should be introduced as soon as possible in small steps.
- After brushing, floss your child's teeth as you would your own teeth
- Put your child's head on your chest and floss as you would your own teeth.
- Floss one tooth at a time
- Goal is always for your child to achieve independence
- Each child is different
- Children with autism can fall in a wide array of the autism spectrum. You will need to work at their the child's own pace to achieve the skills necessary to brush their teeth



PATIENCE

Each child is different. Children with autism can fall in a wide array of the autism spectrum and hence will need to work at their own pace to achieve the skills necessary to brush their teeth. Once a manual toothbrush has been mastered, then an electric brush can be introduced. The power brush is slightly different in that the brush does the work, so the individual no longer needs to do the "brushing." In all cases, the ultimate goal is for the individual with autism to brush their teeth as independently as possible.

SYNOPSIS

- Carefully listening to the parents/caretakers is a key element in gaining their trust, which in turn will help tremendously in gathering data.
- It is important to maintain good, ongoing communication throughout the visits and even after that.
- Patients are likely to be disturbed emotionally by surrounding distracting stimuli like sound, light, and taste. Such discomfort may be reduced by adjusting the dental clinic environment sensitively. The experimental introduction of relight conditions, rhythmic music, and deep pressure in the dental setting can help diminish adverse patient reactions.
- A single treatment room may be also reserved to accommodate the treatment of the autistic child.
- As each patient is an individual, a thorough understanding about each patient is necessary for the dentist. Parents should also have knowledge about the treatment given to their offspring and what is comfortable for him. Emotional skills will be more useful than intellectual and clinical skills.

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