

Optimizing Dental Sanitation in Children With Disabilities

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Abstract: If a child can take care of himself independently, he should be taught to brush his teeth using the KAI or Marthaler method. Otherwise, parents themselves should master the Marthaler method. In contrast to the standard method, cleaning in these options begins with the mastication (depth and tubercle) and not the vestibular (front) surface, because children are especially tenacious at first and can easily damage the periodontium [2] For each treated area it is important to have at least 10 moves.

Keywords: Brushing Marthaler's teeth, Brushing KAI's teeth, Choosing a toothpaste, Choosing a toothbrush.

Marthaler's method of cleaning teeth [2] :

Clean the chewing surface of the teeth using horizontal back and forth movements, first from right to left on the upper jaw, then from left to right on the lower jaw.

The child needs to open his mouth, close his teeth and release his cheeks. Using vertical zigzag movements, clean the vestibular surface of the teeth, holding the upper and lower rows at the same time and moving from right to left.

Clean the oral (inner) surface of the teeth using short vertical movements up and down.

KAI teeth cleaning method [2] :

Clean the chewing surface of the teeth using short progressive horizontal movements, first from right to left on the upper jaw, then from left to right on the lower jaw.

The child should open his mouth and close his teeth. To clean the vestibular surface of the teeth, use circular movements, grab the upper and lower teeth at the same time and move from right to left.

Using vertical sweeping movements from the gum to the edge of the crown, clean the oral surface of the teeth, first from right to left on the upper jaw, then from left to right on the lower jaw.

To prevent the child from suffocating in the paste and water during cleaning, it is necessary to tilt the child's head forward 20-25 degrees [3]. You can put your baby on your lap or in a stroller. If he holds his head unsteadily, place him in the crook of your elbow and carefully guide the opening of his mouth with the fingers of that hand. A gentle massage helps to relax the tense muscles of the cheeks and lips. An irrigator is suitable for rinsing your mouth. So that the child does not swallow the water with the paste, you can help him a little: quickly tilt his head back and immediately tilt it forward [4].

If the disabled child can take care of himself, start brushing his teeth, follow the sequence of actions and always say your actions. When your child gets used to it, teach him to hold the brush with you, and after some time, he can brush his teeth completely independently under your supervision [3].

It is important that the child is not afraid and is involved in the process as much as possible: let him squeeze the toothpaste or open the faucet, play with the toothbrush, brush his teeth. Sit where he watches the water flow into the sink. Make brushing your teeth a ritual: think of a signal that your baby can understand, for example, a sound effect that signals the start of the procedure [4].

Choosing a toothpaste

It is recommended to consult a dentist to choose the right toothpaste for the child's age and condition. The doctor, taking into account individual norms, suggests a toothpaste containing fluoride to reduce the incidence of caries [5].

Choosing a toothbrush

Depending on the characteristics of the child and his readiness for oral hygiene, the following are suitable as a toothbrush:

Special silicone finger toothbrushes [3].

Manual toothbrushes. The size of the head and the hardness of the bristles depend on the age, sensitivity and condition of the child's oral cavity [3]. You can choose a toothbrush with a character from your favorite cartoon.

Electric toothbrushes. They were originally invented for the disabled. These brushes make the cleaning process easier and more efficient. Children usually enjoy the swing and make brushing their teeth a fun game [4].

Treatment of children with special needs in a dental clinic

One of the important points is the choice of a specialist. If possible, you should contact dentists who have experience working with children with special needs. It is worth looking for connections in specialized forums or talking with parents of children with similar disabilities.

Before the appointment, the doctor should be told in detail about the characteristics of the baby's health and behavior, so that the specialist can choose an approach that helps to cooperate with the child and do the work effectively [6]. Thus, unfamiliar smells, loud noises and incomprehensible tools in the office can cause emotional overload in the child, which often turns into hysterics. Therefore, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) suggests that parents develop an adaptation plan for dental appointments [7].

Features of a visit to the dentist for a child with cerebral palsy:

It is better to take it in the morning after a light breakfast to prevent the gag reflex. An hour before the meeting, the teenager can be prescribed an antiemetic [8, 9].

It is necessary to determine where the child will sit - in a wheelchair or in a dental chair.

Stabilize the head and body.

If necessary, fix your legs and arms.

Use a mouth dilator to prevent inadvertent closing of the mouth.

Following these recommendations and visiting the dentist regularly will help maintain the oral health of a child with special needs and prevent the need for lengthy and expensive dental treatment.

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