

Oral Health for Individuals with Special Health Care Needs



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www.vahealth.org/dental

Individuals with Special Health Care Needs (ISHCN)

- Definition from the American Dental Association:

Patients with special needs are those who due to physical, medical, developmental or cognitive conditions require special consideration when receiving dental treatment. This can include people with autism, Alzheimer's disease, Down syndrome, spinal cord injuries and countless other conditions or injuries that can make standard dental procedures more difficult.

Prevalence of ISHCN

- In 2012, **20.3%** of adults in **Virginia** reported having a disability, compared with **21.4%** in the **U.S. (1 out of 5 adults)** - <http://dhds.cdc.gov>
- In 2009, **20% (380,525)** children 0-17 in **Virginia** were reported as having special health care needs, compared with **19.8% (14.6 million)** children in the **U.S. (1 out of 5 children)** – <http://www.childhealthdata.org/learn/NS-CSHCN>

Background



- 1 out of every 4 adults in Virginia have at least one tooth lost to decay or gum disease (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention 2004-2006 survey)
- People with disabilities are approximately 1 ½ times more likely to have tooth loss
- Most dental diseases can be prevented!

Disability Cultural Awareness / Inequity

- Health inequities exist by socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, geography, gender, immigrant status and other social classifications
- Cultural awareness is not only race/ethnicity and socioeconomic: consider the disability community as well



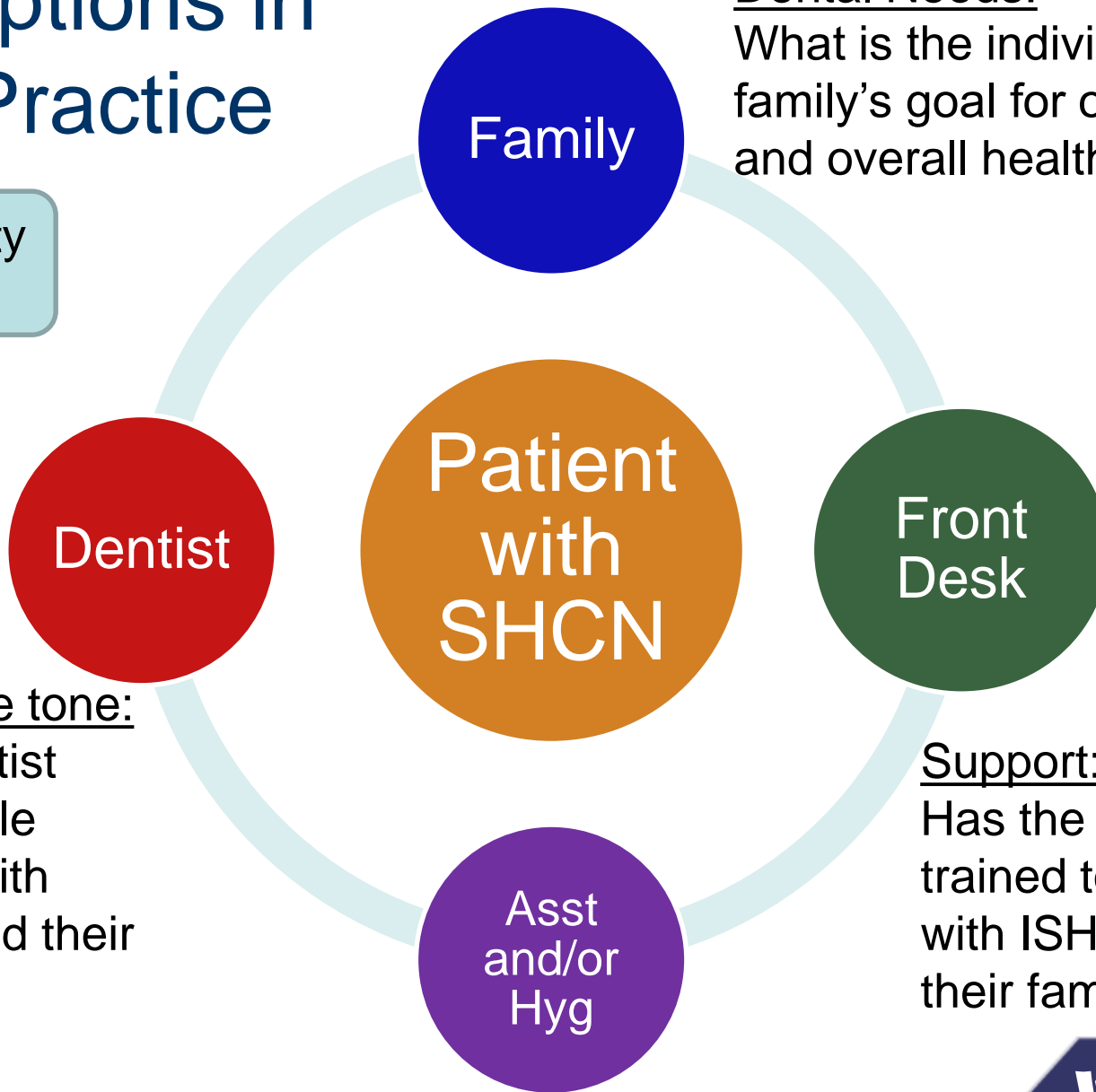
Barriers to Dental Care for ISHCN

- Financial – private pay, insurance, lack of Medicaid coverage
- Community support: accessible dental clinics, transportation, funding, education and awareness
- Communication
- Behavior guidance
- Perceptions: need? confidence? fear?
 - primary health care provider
 - family/caregiver
 - individual
 - dental professional



Perceptions in Practice

Community Support



Dental Needs:
What is the individual's/
family's goal for oral health
and overall health?

Setting the tone:
Is the dentist
comfortable
working with
ISHCN and their
families?

Support:
Has the staff been
trained to work
with ISHCN and
their families?

Five Common Oral Hygiene Related Conditions for ISHCN

- Rumination, gastric reflux, vomiting
- Pouching
- Oral self-injury
- Pica
- Xerostomia

Rumination, Gastric Reflux, and Vomiting

Rumination: chew, swallow, regurgitate, chew again

Result

- High acid
- Erosion
- Increased sensitivity



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Recommendations

- Fluoridated water rinse or baking soda rinse, $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda with 1 cup water
- Increase fluoride use

Pouching

Pouching: holding excess or remnants of food in the buccal folds due to lack of muscular control

Result

- Increased caries
- Increased periodontal disease

Recommendation

- Increase oral hygiene efforts
- Assistance of caregiver to check and clear debris



Oral Self-Injury

Is it habit or is it an attempt to communicate a problem?

Result: damage to teeth or oral tissues



Recommendation

- Comprehensive examination
- Behavior modification
- Consultation with medical professionals
- Mouth guard



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Pica

Pica

- Habitually ingesting non-nutritive items after the age of 18 months – 2 years
- Clay, cigarette butts, paint, feces, stones, vinyl, plastic, pencil erasers, fingernails, coal, paper, etc.
- Most common eating disorder in people with developmental disabilities

Result

- Damage to teeth or oral tissues
- Physical illness and medical complications

Pica

Recommendations

- Behavior modification
- Multidisciplinary approach
 - psychologist
 - social worker
 - physician
 - dentist

Xerostomia

Xerostomia

- Saliva production reduced by $> 50\%$
- Caused by medications, chemo, radiation, etc.

Result

- Decreased ability to fight bacteria
- Decreased natural cleansing of the mouth from salivary flow
- Increased caries and periodontal disease

Xerostomia

Recommendations

- Increase fluoride use
- Saliva replacement
 - multiple brands
 - drops
 - rinses
 - sugar free candy & gum:
depending on age/abilities
 - systemic medications (Rx)



Alternative or Modified Oral Hygiene Procedures

- Positioning
- Handle modifications



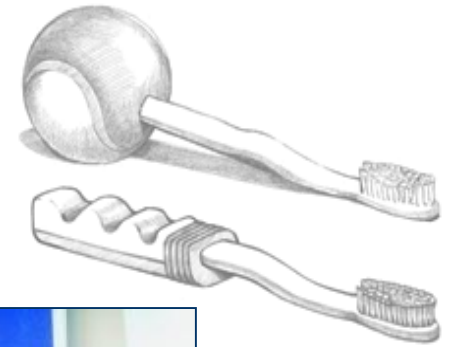
Positioning Alternatives

- Varies according to comfort of caregiver and person needing assistance
- Move out of the bathroom?
- Head, neck and body support: chair, couch, bean bag, bed, floor, etc.
- Less threatening, more soothing
- Approach from behind or beside
- Follow uncontrolled body movements



Oral Hygiene Tool Modifications

- Battery operated toothbrushes
- Tennis ball or bicycle grip
- Taped handles
- Foam tubing
- Lengthen by taping to ruler
- Bending toothbrush handle
- Velcro strip, rubber tubing
- Larger or textured grips
- Weighted handles



Oral Hygiene Tool Modifications

- Three sided toothbrush
- Floss holders
- Sponge swabs / Toothettes



Mouth Props

- Mouth props to gain better caregiver access
 - wrap tape around several tongue depressors
 - sterilized door stop (be aware of potential latex allergy)
 - mouth props purchased from dental companies



Dental Appointments for ISHCN

- Information needed for ISHCN that call for appt: type of disability, assistive equipment, developmental age, etc.
- ‘Get to know you’ office visit
 - desensitizing
 - tour the office
 - review medical history and office policies
- Early morning appts. or right after lunch
 - less crowded, easier to navigate
 - quieter

VDH “Find A Dentist” online tool & resources

- <http://www.vahealth.org/dental>
- Directory compiled to identify Virginia dentists who will care for adult or child patients with special needs and children under 3 years
- Dentists who have responded to a questionnaire from the Virginia Department of Health
- Dentists: please add your contact information or update your information
- Information on oral health trainings

Online Resources for Oral Health Information

American Dental Association

<http://www.mouthhealthy.org/>

American Dental Hygienists' Association

www.adha.org/oralhealth/index.html

click on 'Patient Resources'

Academy of General Dentistry

www.knowyourteeth.com

Online Resources for Oral Health Information

Specialized Care Company

<http://www.specializedcare.com>

commercial company; good tools and video on brushing someone else's teeth

Washington state has developed fact sheets regarding people with special needs:

http://dental.washington.edu/departments/omed/decod/special_needs_facts.php

(see next slide for screenshot of website)



Oral Medicine > Special Needs > Patients with Special Needs

Patients with Special Needs

Resources for Patients and Health Care Professionals

- [Directory of Dentists for Patients with Special Needs](#)
- [Continuing Dental Education Course now available based on information contained in the Fact Sheets!](#)

Through information provided at this site, we hope more of these individuals will have access to dental care and receive home-based dental prevention activities.

- 17% of children in Washington State have a special need; half of these children have mild-moderate special needs.
- Many individuals with special needs do not have access to regular and ongoing dental care.

Fact sheets have been developed for mild to moderate manifestations of a number of special needs conditions. For most conditions there are separate fact sheets for Dental Professionals, Medical Professionals, and Parents and Caregivers. A General Guidance fact sheet is included and is available in Spanish.

Content for the fact sheets was developed by a group of experts affiliated with the University of Washington and the Washington State Department of Health – Oral Health Program.

Information on the process used to develop these fact sheets can be found in the following PDF: [Summary Development Process](#).

Contact Information

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- ADHD
- Anxiety
- Asthma
- Autism
- Cerebral Palsy
- Cleft Lip & Palate
- Congenital
- Cardiac Disorder
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Down Syndrome
- Eating Disorder
- Epilepsy
- Hearing Impaired
- HIV
- Intellectual
- Disability
- Traumatic Brain
- Injury (TBI)

Free Continuing Education Opportunities

Practical Oral Care for People with Developmental Disabilities: Making a Difference

- <http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/OralHealth/Topics/DevelopmentalDisabilities/>
- instructional material and CE test is available in hard copy today (while supplies last) and online
- 2 credit hours geared toward dental professionals

National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center

- <http://www.mchoralhealth.org/SpecialCare/>
- 5 free online modules geared toward medical/dental professionals

Final Thoughts

- Yes, dental providers for ISHCN are desperately needed!
- It takes a community of well-informed dental advocates to reduce dental health disparities in Virginia!



Questions???

Contact Information

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