

THERE IS NO HEALTH WITHOUT GOOD ORAL HEALTH*

Mouth rinses can help to improve overall oral health for those who have a specific oral health problem.

? Question: Who needs to use a mouth rinse?

Individuals who are not able to completely remove plaque with tooth brushing and flossing may need to use a mouth rinse to reduce plaque from those difficult areas. If you have a specific problem, your dentist may recommend a specific mouth rinse for you to use.

? Question: What types of mouth rinses are used for certain problems?

Fluoride—helps strengthen teeth and protect against tooth decay.

Antiseptic/Antibacterial—helps stop the growth of bacteria and used to treat oral infection.

Natural Herbal—Non Alcoholic—works much in the same way as other mouth rinses. Good for those with sensitive/irritated gums, oral sores, children, and alcoholics.

Total Care—antibacterial which helps to reduce the buildup of plaque. Can have additional benefits added.

Dry Mouth (Xerostomia)—should be non-alcoholic and sugar free. Lubricates the mouth.

? Question: Why would aging Iowans or persons with disabilities need to use a mouth rinse?

If they have difficulty maintaining a healthy mouth, they may need to use a mouth rinse. They may have arthritis or a disability making it physically difficult to keep their mouths clean. They are at increased risk for dental decay and gum disease, which can increase the risk or worsen heart disease or diabetes. Many have a dry mouth (xerostomia) from medications and will need to use a mouth rinse or another product to lubricate their mouth.

? Question: Does a mouth rinse replace tooth brushing or flossing?

No. Mouth rinses are used to supplement good oral care and reach areas that are difficult to clean with a brush or floss, and to reduce the risk of dental decay and gum disease.

All health and long term service and support (LTSS) professionals/caregivers are expected to work within their Scopes of Practice or job descriptions as defined by the State or employer. Family caregivers are encouraged to contact the dental or medical provider before making changes to a loved one's care plan.

*Surgeon General, Report on Oral Health, 2000



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Meet Carol, a Registered Dental Hygienist and a Mouth Care Matters consultant and instructor.

Carol Van Aernam is a Mouth Care Matters (MCM) instructor and consultant for Iowa CareGivers. She plays a key role in planning, promoting, and teaching MCM. Carol worked in private dental practice for several years and 34 years for the Veterans Administration and Central Iowa Health Care System as a dental hygienist. She specializes in geriatric care and has presented programs at the local and national levels to those who work in direct care, dietitians, dentists, dental hygienists, and other caregivers. In addition, Carol served as an adjunct instructor for Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) and the University of Iowa.



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