Oral health, swallowing and hydration in aged care - Position statement

Our position

Good oral health is very important. It's linked to improved quality of life, health and wellbeing. But oral health complications are all too common in residential aged care facilities. Many residents suffer from swallowing complications due to dysphagia and dehydration. Both are causes for concern, particularly due to the resulting health complications.

We are calling on the Australian Government to fund the development of National Meal Guidelines. The Guidelines will help aged care providers improve the oral health and hygiene of residents.

Background

Currently, outcomes in aged care patients are very poor. Issues such as the repair of natural teeth, decay, gum disease and oral cancers are very common.

Swallowing is a challenge for aged care patients, with 50-70% suffering from dysphagia. This can lead to malnutrition and dehydration. Staff should receive more training on correct feeding positions and practices. Meals and drinks should be provided under the direction of speech pathologists and APDs.

For more information, read our full position statement on oral, health swallowing and dehydration in aged care.

Get in touch

If you have questions about this position statement, contact us at policy@dietitiansaustralia.org.au