2. Toothbrush Modifications
Customised handgrips and extension handles for toothbrushes may assist clients to effectively brush their own teeth when poor grip or limited joint mobility are identified as barriers to toothbrushing. Many clients will always need some assistance with cleaning their teeth.

Attentions to toothbrush handles:
1. small perforated rubber ball
2. self-curing acrylic resin
3. handle pushed into a large bore vinyl tube
4. foam rubber handle
5. bicycle handle-bar grip filled with plaster of Paris
6. commercial vinyl utensil holder with adjustable Velcro strap

3. Cleaning between teeth
There are several devices to assist people remove plaque from in between the teeth. Many of these are available at pharmacies. Check with the dental professional for instructions on use. Some of the devices available are listed below:

- **Dental tape**, or ribbon, is wider than dental floss. Clients may find this type easier to manage.
- **Interdental brushes** can be used to clean wide spaces between the teeth; spaces due to gum recession; teeth which have tilted or drifted; the backs of last teeth; isolated teeth and other inaccessible areas. When using the interdental brush, insert between the teeth and use a gentle, straight, back-and-forth motion avoiding bending or twisting the brush.
- **Sulcus toothbrush** has a narrow head with only two rows of bristles. This may help clients to overcome the ‘gagging’ reflex when cleaning the back teeth. It can also be used to clean gums and teeth in difficult or hard to reach areas.
- **Flossing Aids.** Check with the pharmacy regarding the availability of dental floss holders and single use disposable flossing products.

### Special Oral Hygiene Aids
For People With A Disability

Care of Toothbrushes in Group Settings
A toothbrush is a personal item and should never be shared. In group situations a method of identification of individual toothbrushes is recommended such as labelling, colour coding, location of storage. Provided there is no sharing, disinfection of a person’s toothbrush is not necessary. After each use, the brush should be rinsed thoroughly, dried and stored in a container or in a stand allocate on an individual basis.

If contamination of a toothbrush (beyond the person’s own oral cavity) does occur, or is suspected, the following procedure is recommended:

- **Thoroughly clean** the toothbrush bristles with a detergent, rinse and dry.
- **Disinfect** the toothbrush by immersing it in a sodium hypochlorite solution (such as Milton) for at least 10 minutes. Do not add additional items or top-up the disinfectant solution.
- **Rinse and dry** the toothbrush before storage.

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Chlorhexidine

Chlorhexidine is an antiseptic which is used extensively as a dental plaque inhibitor. Chlorhexidine offers an additional means of controlling plaque and improving the standard of oral health. Clinical studies have demonstrated the usefulness of a number of Chlorhexidine preparations, including mouth washes and gels.

How does Chlorhexidine work?
When sufficient Chlorhexidine is adsorbed on the tooth surface it exerts a bacteriostatic action on dental plaque. Chlorhexidine is effective against organisms associated with gum disease and also effective against Streptococcus mutans, an organism frequently associated with tooth decay.

Limitations
Chlorhexidine is not a cure-all in the fight against dental disease. Certain limitations include:

- Chlorhexidine is more effective on new plaque than old plaque, so it is still important to try to brush off as much plaque as possible.
- The presence of calculus (hardened plaque), defective fillings, or periodontal pockets hinders the effectiveness of Chlorhexidine to vulnerable sites. A dental professional will attend to these factors.
- Chlorhexidine and some toothpastes are not compatible. For optimal anti-microbial effect, do not use Chlorhexidine within one hour before or after the use of toothpaste.

Uses
Chlorhexidine is best used under the supervision of a dental professional, and then only as an adjunct to professional care. Indications for oral use include:

- treatment and prevention of gingivitis, periodontitis and tooth decay;
- Candida infections in the mouth (thrush);
- ulcerations in the mouth;
- after oral surgery.

Recommendations

- Follow recommendations of the prescribing dentist/doctor. Prolonged use is not recommended.
- Regimen for use, such as frequency, strength and usage in conjunction with other agents such as Sodium Laurel Sulphate (in most toothpastes), must be under the direction of a dental professional.
- Remember to remove the client’s dentures before using Chlorhexidine.
- Check for yellow/brown staining of teeth associated with the use of Chlorhexidine. This usually only becomes a problem with prolonged, frequent use.
- Report any suspected side effects to a dentist/doctor. For example, redness of the mouth or swelling of the salivary glands. People with a history of multiple drug reactions should avoid using Chlorhexidine.

Chlorhexidine products for oral use on anti-convulsants
Alcohol-free Chlorhexidine is recommended for people on anti-epileptic medication(s). Chlorhexidine 0.2% mouthwashes may contain as much as 11.8% ethanol. Alcohol is known to interact with anti-convulsant drugs and may reduce the seizure threshold. Alcohol-free is also recommended for people who have reduced salivary flow and resulting dry mouth.

Other Cleaning Devices

1. Collis Curve Toothbrush
The Collis Curve toothbrush is designed to clean three tooth surfaces at once. To start, place bristles over the tops of the front teeth. Using a short back-and-forth motion, progress to the back teeth. Repeat for all teeth. If necessary, tilt the brush from side-to-side to ensure reaching the gumline (see diagram above). Temporary bleeding may occur indicating that plaque has not been removed previously from this area. If bleeding does not stop after a few days see a dental professional. Choose correct size brush from: Adult Soft (clear cap); Adult Perio (red cap); Youth (blue cap); Baby (green cap)

Pharmacies can order Collis Curve from:
Mrallen Investments Pty Ltd (08) 8338 0088, fax (08) 8338 0099. Some retail outlets include:

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<tr>
<td>Bassendean Pharmacy</td>
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