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In the new Aged Care Act Rules, the only mention of a dental practitioner is that we are not part of the allied health professions (page 2). Dental practitioners, dentists, oral health therapists, dental hygienists, dental therapists and dental prosthetists are not mentioned as providing any services to persons in aged care. Oral health and general health are connected. Poor oral health leads to illness, hospitalisation and death from sepsis, aspiration pneumonia and infective endocarditis.

Under Nursing, nurses are required to provide assistance with, or provision of support for, personal hygiene, including oral health management and considerations for bariatric care needs (page 35). Without hands-on training by dental practitioners, nurses are unable to assess and plan for the needs of older persons who are suffering from pain and dental neglect. Nurses are also not able to accurately identify and plan for older persons who have had complex dental procedures, including veneers, crowns, crown and bridge, implants, implant-over-dentures, and fixed and removable orthodontic retainers.

Dental practitioners must be included in the services list in order to provide best-practice and evidence-based oral health assessments, oral health care plans, oral health instructions / education, recommendation of dental products and aids, and referral to appropriate dental treatment (dentist, oral health therapist or dental prosthetist).



Twice-daily oral health care is integral to well-being, quality of life, eating, talking and smiling.