

HEALTH & SAFETY: DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

“After the Dental Appointment”

BQIS/Outreach Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual’s health and safety and to improving their quality of life. This is the fourth of four Fact Sheets regarding Dental Appointments.

Objectives

Reader will understand what actions and notifications are necessary to ensure dental recommendations are implemented appropriately.

Definitions

Dental Health Provider: Any dentist, dental hygienist or clinician that requires an appointment and evaluation to provide services and recommendations to an individual.

Facts

- Dental orders and recommendations are often missed, not implemented or followed up on in a timely manner

Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. Discuss any new orders or recommendations with the individual, answer questions and offer support as necessary at a level appropriate to the individual’s comprehension.
2. Take the individual home, back to work etc. and ensure their needs are met timely.
3. Follow dentist recommendations of a waiting period before allowing the person to chew food and drink hot beverages if dental procedures were performed with local anesthesia. This waiting period is required to prevent the individual from biting their cheek or tongue, burning their mouth, or choking due to numbness associated with local anesthetic. Exercise caution when allowing a person to drink even cold beverages before the numbing sensation has gone as they will be at a higher risk of choking during this time due to not feeling the food in their mouth as well and not being able to move food around in their mouth as well.

4. It is important to understand that certain types of dental treatments will necessitate temporary changes in texture of food. An example of this is after an individual has had an alloy, silver, filling placed on a tooth. The normal recommendation is 24 hours of a soft food diet, but follow the dentist's person-specific recommendations. If the person is normally on a more restrictive diet texture, such as pureed, follow the more restrictive diet.
5. It is important to know that after certain dental procedures, such as tooth extraction, an individual may not be able to smoke or drink using a straw for several days. This is due to the fact that the sucking action used to smoke and drink through a straw may disrupt the formation and retention of a blood clot which is necessary for healing.
6. Notify the nurse/supervisor or other personnel per agency policy of the outcome of the appointment and discuss any new orders or recommendations and upcoming appointments/procedures.
7. Ensure that any immediate follow up recommendations are done. This may include asking the individual if they are still feeling numb or if they are experiencing any pain or sensitivity.
8. Designated person to communicate outcome of the appointment with the support team. This includes discussion and/or demonstration of any recommended oral hygiene recommendations.
9. Support team to address any issues/barriers regarding implementation of recommendations.
10. Take prescriptions to the pharmacy or deliver per agency policy. Be sure you have a copy of the prescription for the person's medical record.
11. Ensure there is a method to follow up whether needed medications or supplies are delivered in a timely manner and what action is needed in the event they are not. This would include notifying the dentist of the delay in case there would be additional actions needing to be taken due to the delay.
12. Purchase supplies necessary to implement treatments/recommendations. This includes any oral hygiene aides recommended by the dentist or dental hygienist that were not provided.
13. Transcribe any medication orders to the Medication Administration Record per agency policy ensuring that they are double checked by another staff person as soon as available.
14. Transcribe all orders for monitoring and observation, dental hygiene/oral care and notifications to a treatment sheet so that all staff are aware of the supports that are required for the person's health issue.
15. Provide staff training as necessary for new dental hygiene/oral care procedures and/or medications.
16. Mark any new appointments or scheduled procedures on the person's daily calendar or according to agency protocol.
17. Ensure a designated person completes revisions to the Risk plan as necessary.
18. Follow agency policy or physician order for monitoring if sedated prior to or during appointment. This should include at least the following:
 - ambulating with assist
 - do not offer food or drink by mouth until the person returns to baseline.

Learning Assessment

Questions that can be used to verify a person's competency in the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. True or False: Following a dental procedure, the person may be on a soft texture diet for a period of time specified by the dentist.
2. If you cannot read the dentist's recommendations on your form you should:
 - A. Wait until the next day and call your supervisor.
 - B. Do the best you can and transcribe what you think it says.
 - C. Notify your supervisor immediately.
3. Following a dental procedure where local anesthesia was used it is important to not allow the person to chew food or drink hot beverages until the numbing sensation is gone because:
 - A. If the beverage is too hot, it could burn their mouth without them knowing it was too hot.
 - B. The person could chew the inside of their cheek or tongue resulting in an open wound.
 - C. The person is at a higher risk for choking because they will not be able to feel the food in their mouth as well and will not be able to move it around in their mouth as well.
 - D. All of the above.
4. True or False: If the person was sedated for the dental appointment, give them something to eat and drink immediately following the appointment.

References

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Related Resources

Dental Appointment Series Fact Sheets: "Initial Contact", "Preparing for the Dental Appointment", and "During the Dental Appointment"

Managing Appointment Series Fact Sheets: "Initial Contact", "Preparing for the Healthcare Appointment", "During the Appointment" and "After the Appointment"

Managing Appointment Series Checklists: "Initial Contact", "Preparing for the Healthcare Appointment", "During the Appointment", and "After the Appointment"

Learning Assessment Answers

1. True
2. C
3. D
4. False

Outreach Services

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OR-FS-HS-DT-42(02-10-10)