



This standard of practice is to support the PSW in providing safe, respectful, and effective personal care to the public population in a dignified and ethical approach. Standards of Practice outline the expectations of the PSW and their responsibility in the delivery of care.

Mouth Care - Also known as oral hygiene, keeps the mouth and teeth clean, it prevents mouth odour, infections, gum disease and tooth decay.

Mouth care can include assisting with teeth brushing, denture care, and mouth swabs. Good oral hygiene will facilitate in food tasting better and increase overall client comfort and oral health. If the person(s) is unable to perform their own mouth care, the person(s) would require a Personal Support Worker. If the person(s) is unable to hold a toothbrush, remove dentures or no longer understands how to do mouth care, the client would require a Personal Support Worker level of care to complete this task. The PSW may perform routine cleaning of teeth or dentures. The PSW may perform mouth care on a person(s) who is unconscious or requires oral suctioning. Oral suctioning may involve the use of a bulb syringe and or an oral suction catheter called a Yank Auer (also known as a tonsil sucker). The use of machine operated suctioning can cause loss of airway and oxygen if not used properly. It is important that the PSW has received the proper training in their certification curriculum, and it is important for the PSW to be aware of the policy of the facility they are working in. If for some reason the PSW has not received the proper training or is not sure of the use, an RHP must train the PSW in this procedure, while following the RHPA.

PSW – Personal Support Worker

RN/RPN – Registered Nurse/ Registered Practical Nurse

RHPA – Regulated Health Professions Act

Resources - Sheila A. Sorrentino, PhD, RN, Leighann Remmert, MS, RN and Mary J. Wilk, RN, GNC(C), BA, BScN, MN, Mosby's Canadian Textbook for the Support Worker, 3rd Edition