# Talking Points for Caregivers of Older Adults

## 1. “I’ve noticed changes in daily routines. How might this affect their oral health?”

Changes in memory, dexterity, mobility, or motivation can quickly impact brushing, flossing, and denture care. This conversation helps the hygienist assess functional ability and adjust home care strategies accordingly.

## 2. “How do their medical conditions and medications impact their mouth?”

Many systemic diseases and medications affect saliva, healing, infection risk, and inflammation. Discussing the full health picture allows for a more accurate oral risk assessment and personalized preventive plan.

## 3. “What can we do now to help them keep their teeth for as long as possible?”

This opens discussion about prevention-focused care, realistic expectations, and planning ahead before further decline occurs, rather than reacting after problems develop.

## 4. “Are there modifications or accommodations that could make dental visits easier for them?”

Caregivers can ask about shorter appointments, positioning supports, communication strategies, or scheduling considerations to reduce stress and improve safety and comfort.

## 5. “What is the plan if they can no longer come into the dental office?”

This crucial question encourages early planning for future care, including caregiver-assisted oral hygiene, mobile dental hygiene options, coordination with medical or long-term care teams, and comfort-focused care if needed. Oral health often declines quietly as aging progresses. Caregivers who ask these questions help ensure oral care remains preventive, compassionate, and appropriate, protecting comfort, dignity, and quality of life.

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