

Oral Swabs CAN Help:

- Remove pocketed food (food in the cheeks or spaces between the teeth) before toothbrushing
- Wet a dry mouth



Follow your work rules on glove use.

Oral swabs should NOT replace toothbrushing. Oral swabs are not able to clean the mouth as well as a toothbrush. Toothbrushes remove debris and plaque (a sticky film) from the tongue, cheeks and teeth.

The Spongey Tip of an Oral Swabs is:

- Too soft to clean the gums or remove plaque from the teeth
- Likely to push debris and residue (leftover food in the mouth) around the mouth
- Small enough to be a choking hazard. Please be careful when using oral swabs



Oral swabs can help in special situations, when toothbrushing is not possible. For example, if someone is in end-of-life care, has severe mouth pain, or has other medical reasons. In these cases, oral swabs can help keep the mouth wet and comfortable. But remember that oral swabs are not able to clean the mouth as well as a toothbrush. **If toothbrushing is possible, use a toothbrush instead.**

Other Options

- Wet gauze wrapped around a finger — be careful and use your judgment before putting your finger in someone's mouth
- Suction or foam toothbrush
- Oral syringe



Lemon Glycerin Swabs

- **Do not use lemon glycerin swabs.** They are too acidic. They can wear down the tooth enamel (outer layer of the teeth) and irritate the mouth.

