

Toothbrushing 101



Why oral hygiene is important



Oral hygiene products



Helping someone brush



Brushing natural teeth



Brushing partial teeth



Brushing overdenture



Brushing full denture



Brushing toothless mouth

Don't forget
the mouth!



index

Why oral hygiene is important

A healthy and clean mouth is important to be able to eat, speak and laugh properly. And to be able to get comfortably close to other people. Proper chewing is also good for your mental capacities and memory because it stimulates the flow of blood to the brain.

Poor oral hygiene also increases the risk of pneumonia and cardiovascular disease. Poor oral hygiene can disrupt the blood sugar levels of people with diabetes.

Proper brushing removes plaque.

Don't forget
the mouth!



index

Why oral hygiene is important

Plaque is a whitish/yellowish layer of a mixture of food particles, saliva and bacteria. It accumulates between and on the teeth and molars and along the gum line.

Removing plaque prevents cavities, inflammation, fungal infections, and pain. It also gives you a healthy appearance and fresh breath. Who doesn't want that?!

The toolkit is meant for those who are vulnerable, dependent on care, and have a reduced ability to maintain oral hygiene or undergo dental treatment.



Oral hygiene products

1. Regular toothbrushes

Choose a small brush head with soft bristles. Replace the toothbrush when the bristles start to point in opposite directions, but at least once every three months.

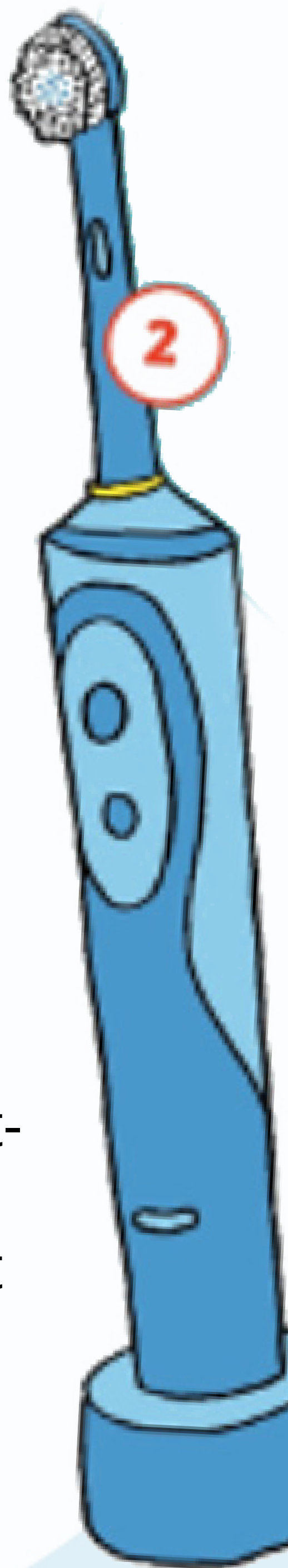




Oral hygiene products

2. Electric toothbrushes

With an electric toothbrush, brushing is easier and more effective. Older people who are not used to electric toothbrushes may however find the vibrations and noise to be annoying. Replace the toothbrush when the bristles start to point in opposite directions, but at least once every three months.

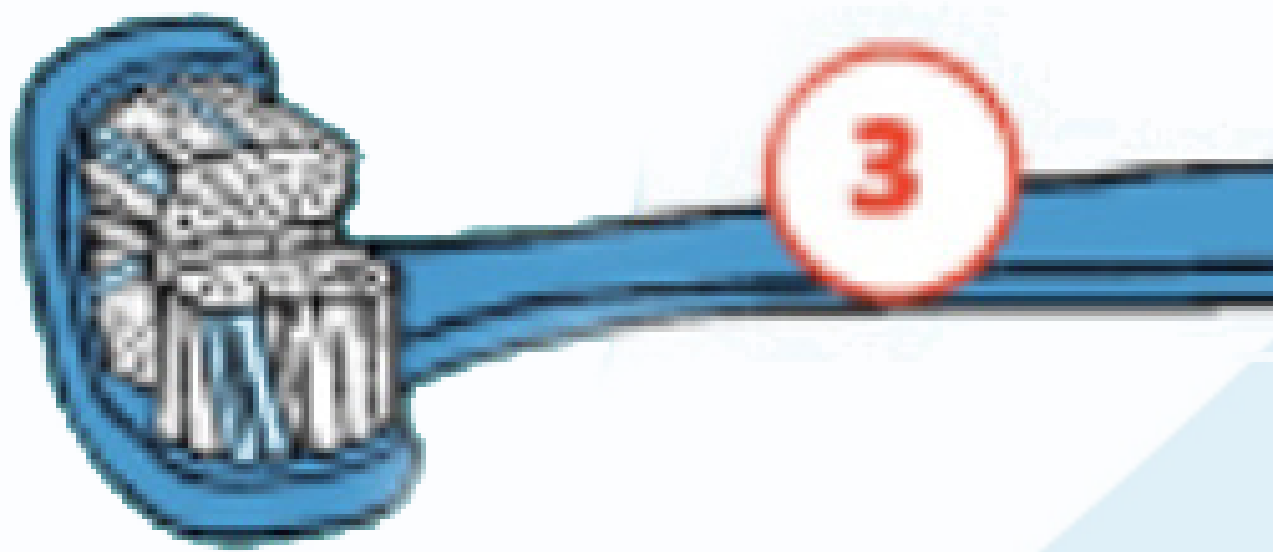




Oral hygiene products

3. Three-sided toothbrushes

Sometimes it can be difficult to brush the inside of the teeth, and some people will bite the toothbrush. A three-sided toothbrush can help in those situations. They are available at specialty web shops: see “useful addresses”.





Oral hygiene products

4. Denture toothbrushes

A denture toothbrush has a large brush head and a compact tuft. The compact tuft used to clean the narrow inner surface of the denture and the large brush is used to clean everything else.

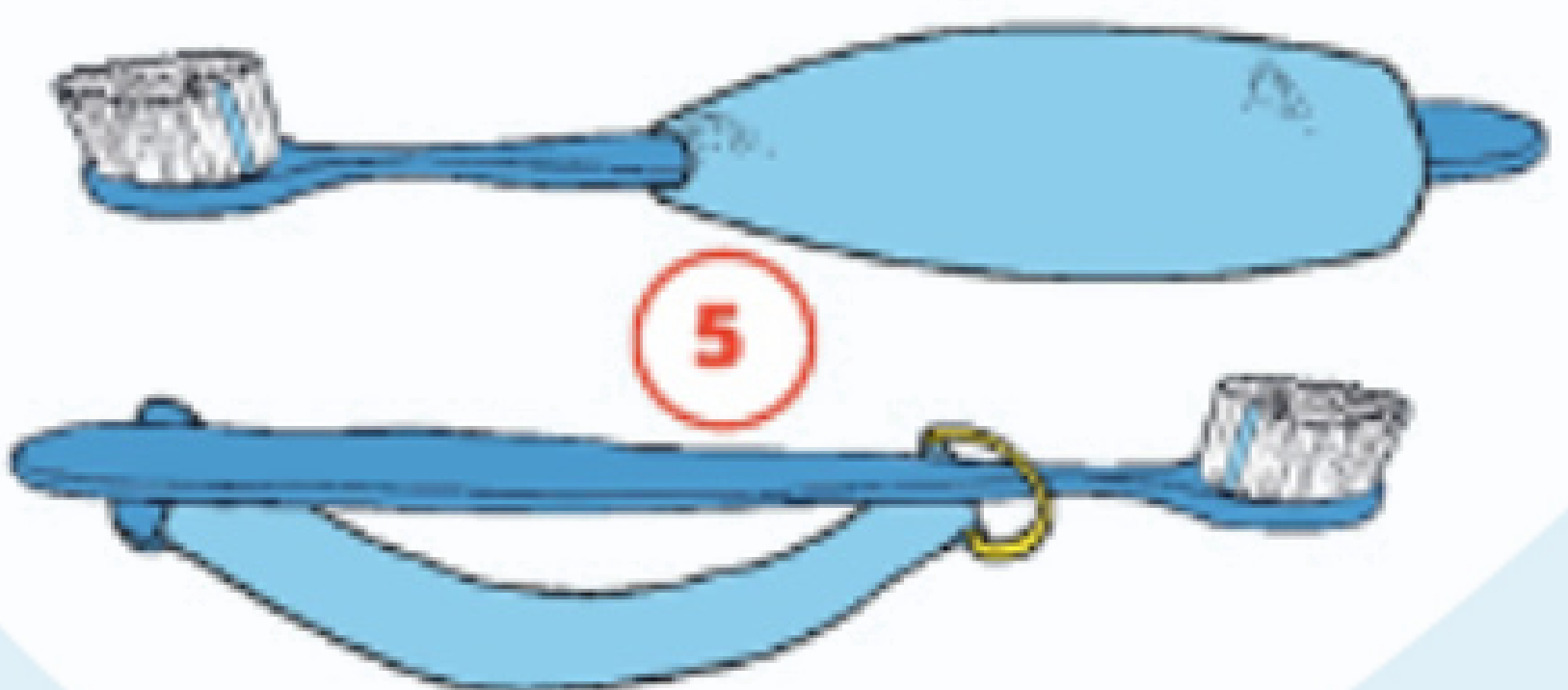




Oral hygiene products

5. Help to hold a toothbrush

If someone is unable to hold a toothbrush properly, there are all kinds of devices that can help, such as handle thickeners and straps to secure the toothbrush to the hand. Ask your dentist, dental hygienist or occupational therapist.





Oral hygiene products

6. Oral swabs

If you are unable to brush your teeth, you can use an oral swab to remove at least food particles.

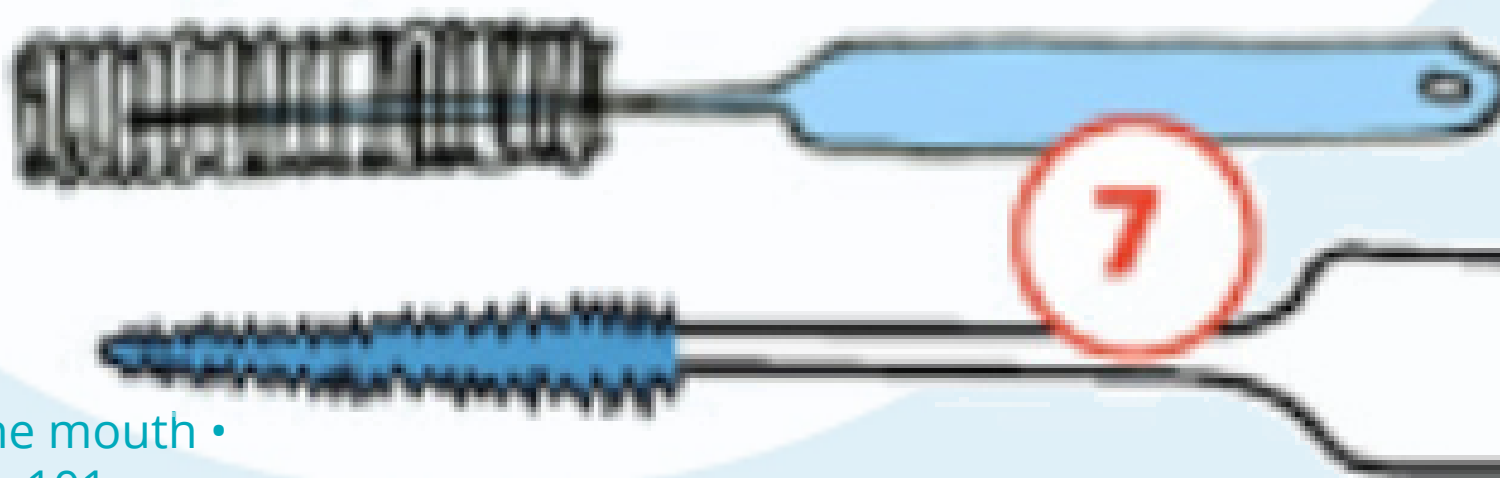




Oral hygiene products

7. Interdental brushes

Interdental brushes come in various thicknesses. Choose a thickness that will fit in between the teeth and molars. Interdental brushes have an iron core and nylon bristles. When the bristles start to point in opposite directions (after 3 - 5 days), the interdental brush needs to be replaced. Rinse off the interdental brush and let it dry after use.

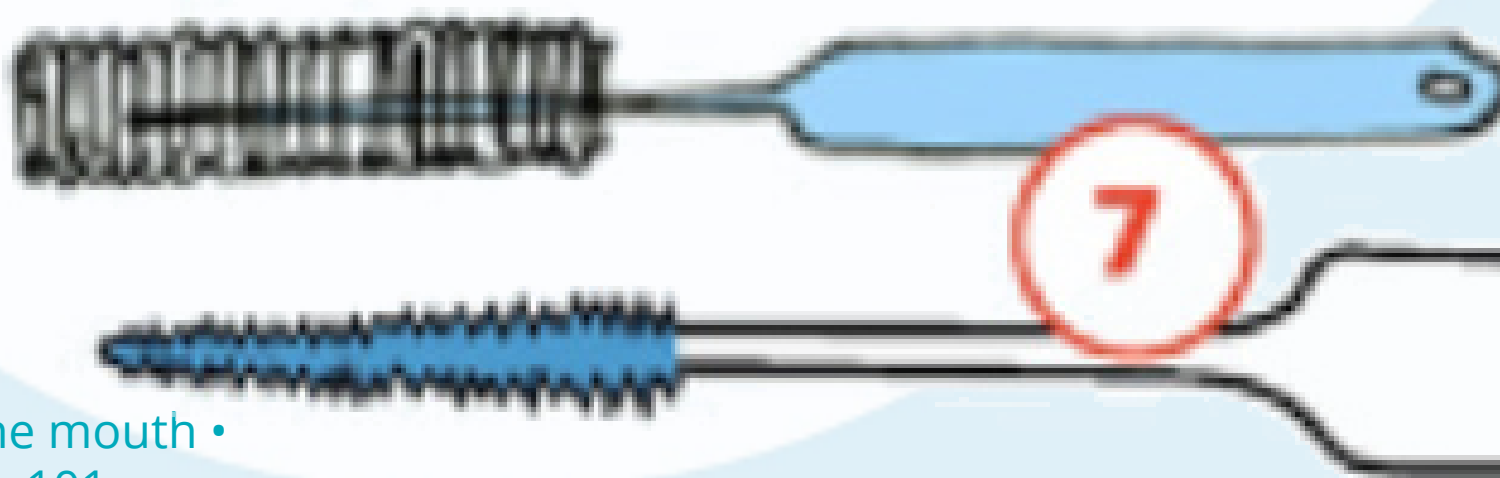




Oral hygiene products

7. Interdental brushes

There are also interdental brushes made entirely of plastic. These are for single-use only and clean a little less well, but some people find them more agreeable. Dental sticks are also a possibility, but they do not clean as well and are inconvenient to use on someone other than yourself. Flossing is certainly not the best option for older people, as the gaps between their teeth and molars are too big.

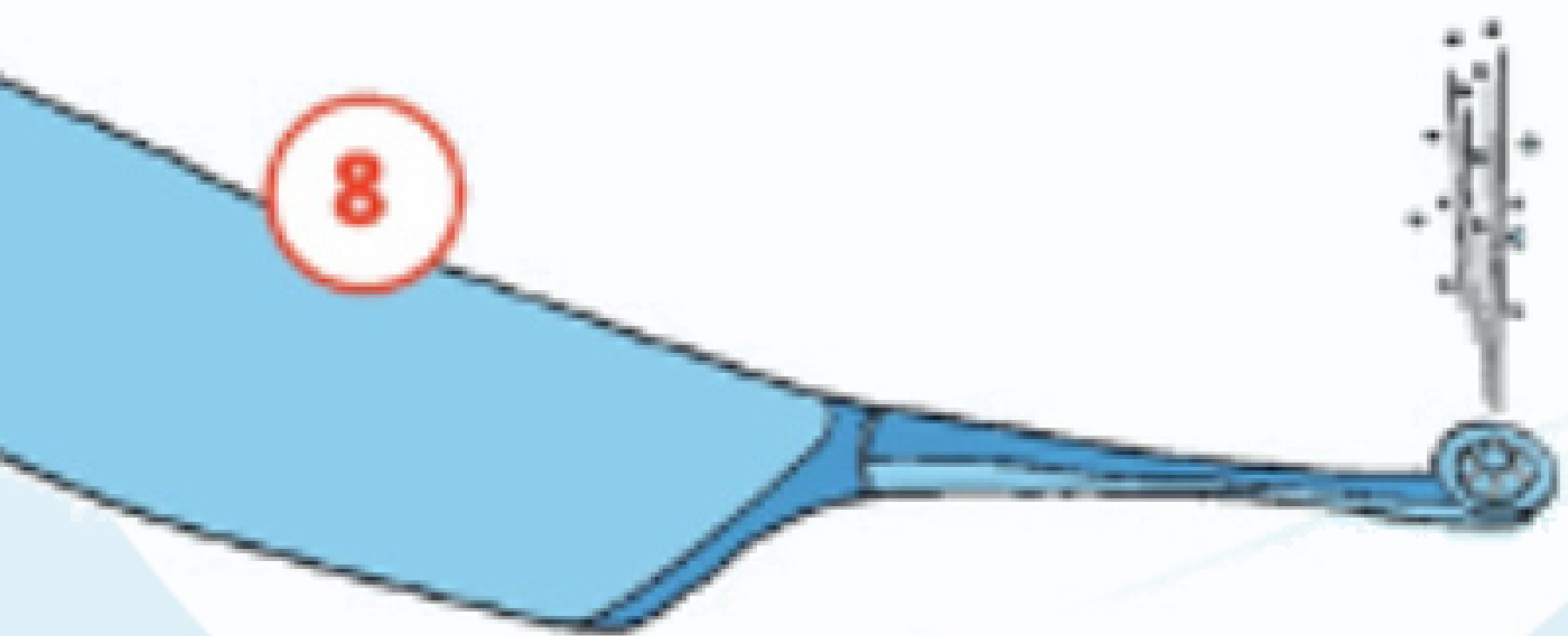




Oral hygiene products

8. Airfloss

If interdental brushing doesn't do the job, an "airfloss" might help. These devices squirt puffs of water and air between the teeth and molars to wash away food particles and a bit of plaque.





Oral hygiene products

8. Airfloss

If you have a prescription from your dentist or dental hygienist, an airfloss can also be used with mouthwash (chlorhexidine or fluoride) for added protection, rather than water. Caution: an airfloss can lead to choking in people who have difficulty swallowing.





Oral hygiene products

Toothpastes:

- Use a toothpaste with fluoride
- For cleaning dentures use soft, non-aggressive toothpaste



Helping someone brush

Helping someone brush their teeth can be a delicate operation: both the person in need of help and the person giving it can find it off-putting. These tips can help make toothbrushing both effective and enjoyable. And once you've both got the hang of it, oral hygiene is just part of the job and it gives results that you can enjoy together: a clean and healthy mouth.





Tips for oral hygiene helpers:

The right atmosphere

- Increase the level of oral hygiene assistance gradually.
- Accept the fact that not everything will get brushed equally well the first few times. A good experience is easy to build on; a frustrating experience is not easily forgotten.



Tips for oral hygiene helpers:

The right atmosphere



- Every time teeth are brushed:
- take your time and aim for a calm atmosphere
 - initiate contact and say what you are going to do
 - speak calmly and use short sentences
 - take breaks, as needed
 - let people know things are going well, make compliments, and use humour when appropriate
 - say when you're done.



Tips for oral hygiene helpers:

The right atmosphere

If brushing is difficult, at least make sure that the upper and lower jaw get the same amount of attention each day: start with the upper jaw in the morning and the lower jaw in the evening.



If someone is relaxed, the muscles of the mouth will also relax



Tips for oral hygiene helpers:

Time and place

If there is not enough time or peace and quiet in the mornings or evenings, choose a more suitable time.

What if toothbrushing in the bathroom isn't an option? Choose a different location, and take along water, a cup, and something to spit in.



Tips for oral hygiene helpers:

Helping someone brush their own teeth

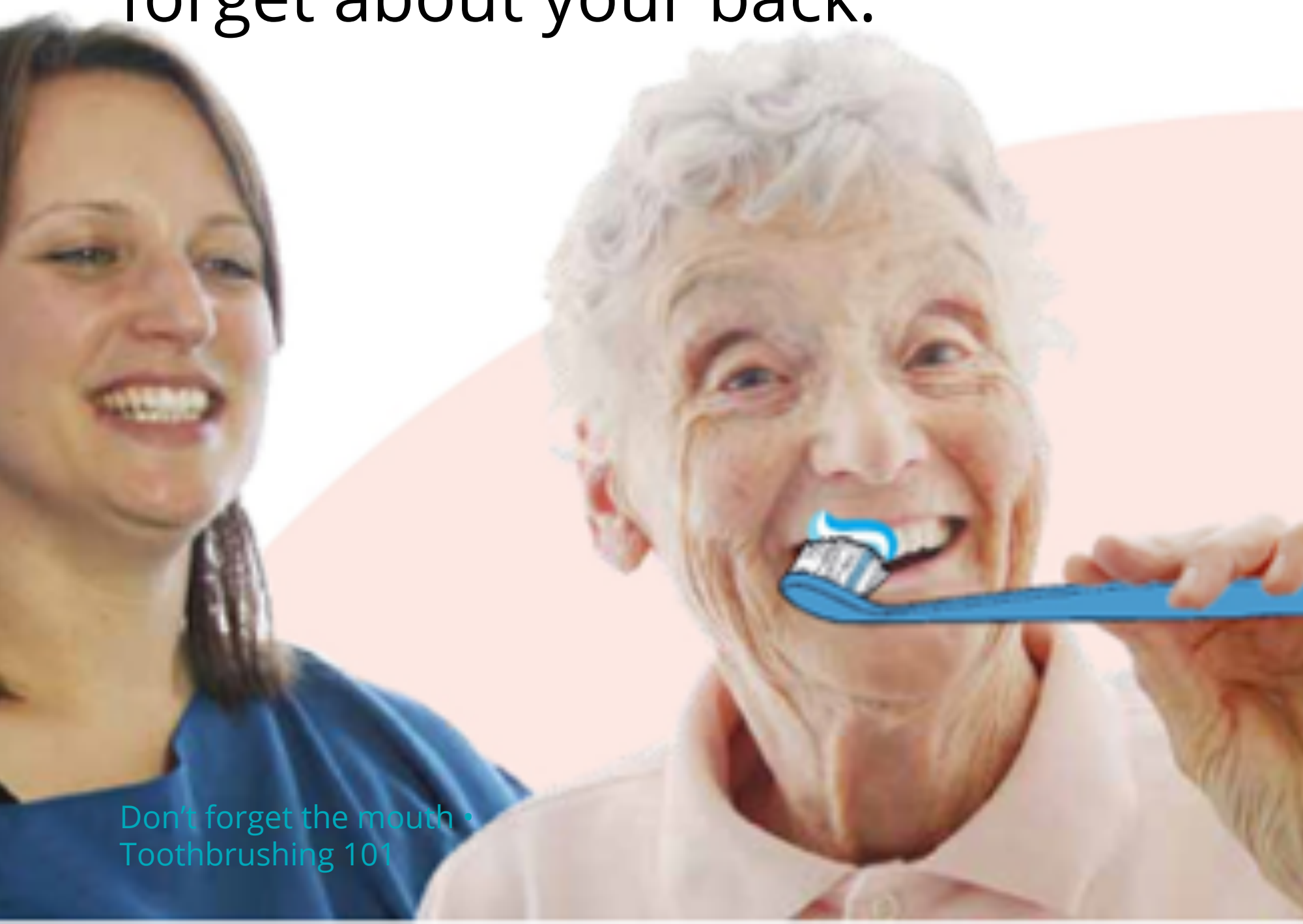
- Brush your own teeth to demonstrate how it's done, or just to break the ice.
- Keep an eye on things and give pointers, if appropriate. You could also take a look together at the toothbrushing chart in this brochure.
- Ask if you can rebrush a few places, if needed.



Tips for oral hygiene helpers:

Brushing position

Toothbrushing can be accomplished from different positions. Choose the position that best suits you and the person you are assisting. Things to think about: comfort, contact, good view of and access to the entire mouth. Don't forget about your back.





Tips for oral hygiene helpers:

Both seated

- Sit directly in front of the person you are assisting, with your legs wide apart. That will help achieve a stable position.
- Make sure that the person you are assisting is seated comfortably and has sufficient head support (for example, a neck cushion). This is when the mouth muscles are most relaxed.
- If the person you are assisting is seated in a stooped position, you can sit on a chair next to him/her or get on your knees in front of him/her (for the sake of your own health, make sure to keep your back straight).



Tips for oral hygiene helpers:

You are standing, and the person you are assisting is seated



Stand diagonally to the right of/behind the person you are assisting (or to the left if you are left-handed). Cradle the other person's head between your armpit and free arm and hand while angling the head slightly downwards. "Cradling" the head helps keep the head still, relaxes the mouth muscles, and prevents gagging.






Tips for oral hygiene helpers:

You are standing, and the person you are assisting is lying in bed

- Raise the bed to hip height. And the head of the bed to a 45 degree angle.
- Ask the person you are assisting to turn the head slightly towards you, if possible.
- If the head of the bed cannot be raised, lay the person on their side. Place a cardboard kidney dish (or a soft moisture-absorbent pad) under the cheek to allow fluids to drain from the mouth and prevent the other person from choking.



Tips for oral hygiene helpers:

-  If the bed cannot be raised, do the above while seated.
-  With your free hand, hold the cheek and lips to the side so that you have a clear view of where you are brushing.
-  After brushing, do not wipe the mouth, but rather dab from the cheek to the mouth. Apply firm pressure for two seconds when you are finished. This promotes lip closure and the swallow reflex.



Tips for oral hygiene helpers:



If someone tends to bite the toothbrush, you could try using a three-headed brush. On the advice of and with proper instruction from the dentist or dental hygienist, you could also try using a bite stick.



In order to prevent fracture it is recommended to perform denture cleaning over a raised area and place a towel over it. Such in case the denture falls.



The use of gloves prevents germ transmission



index

Brushing natural teeth: upper jaw



1

*inner molar
surfaces*



index

Brushing natural teeth: upper jaw



2

*outer molar
surfaces*



index

Brushing natural teeth: upper jaw

**2X
Daily**



3

*upper and rear
molar surfaces*



[index](#)

Brushing natural teeth: upper jaw



4

*front tooth
surfaces*



index

Brushing natural teeth: upper jaw



5

*back tooth
surfaces*



index

Brushing natural teeth: upper jaw



6

**1X
Daily**

use interdental brush
between all teeth and molars

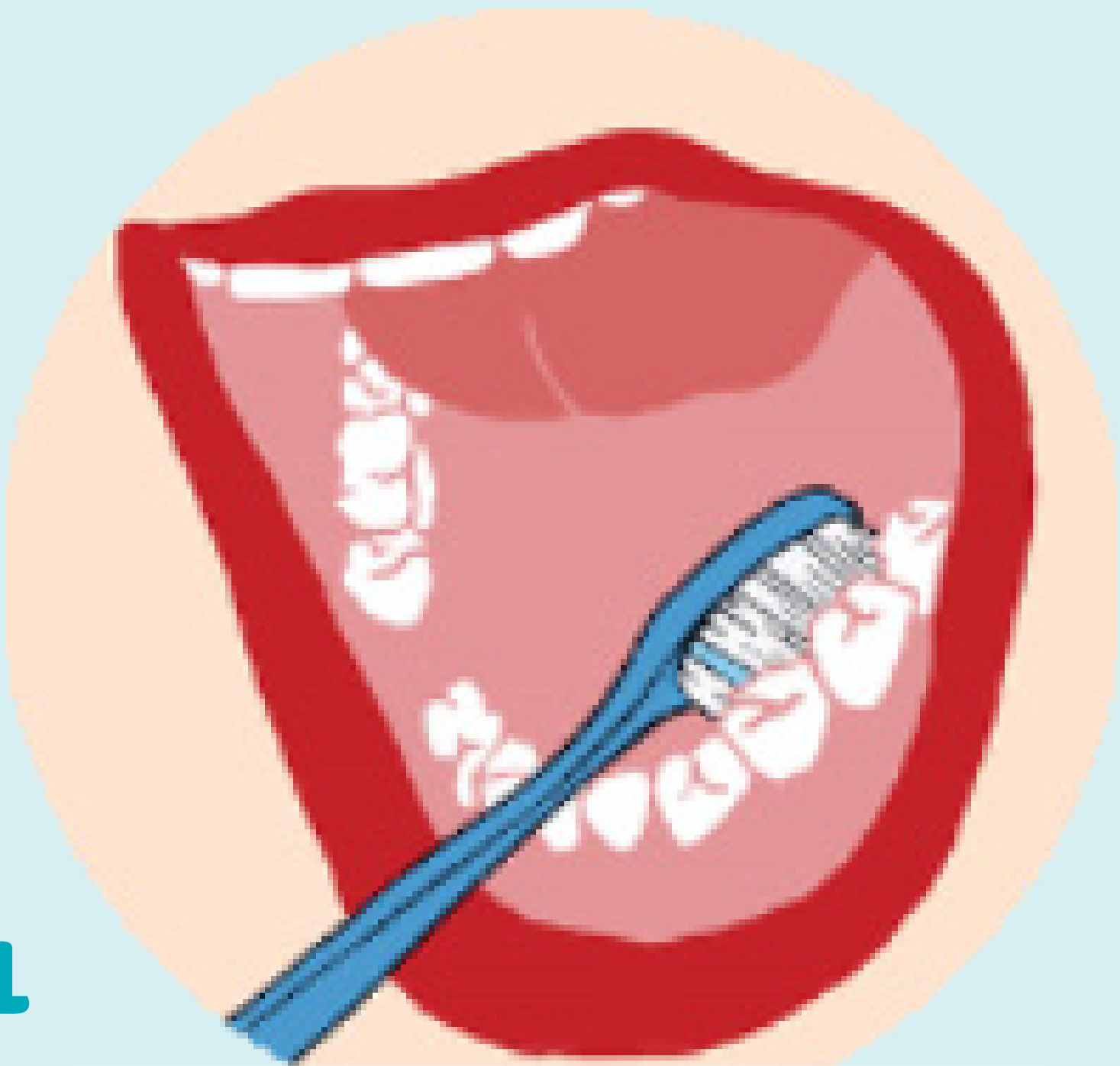
missing teeth:
brush in between



index

Brushing natural teeth: lower jaw

1



*inner molar
surfaces*



index

Brushing natural teeth: lower jaw



*outer molar
surfaces*



index

Brushing natural teeth: lower jaw

2X
Daily



upper and rear
molar surfaces



index

Brushing natural teeth: lower jaw

4

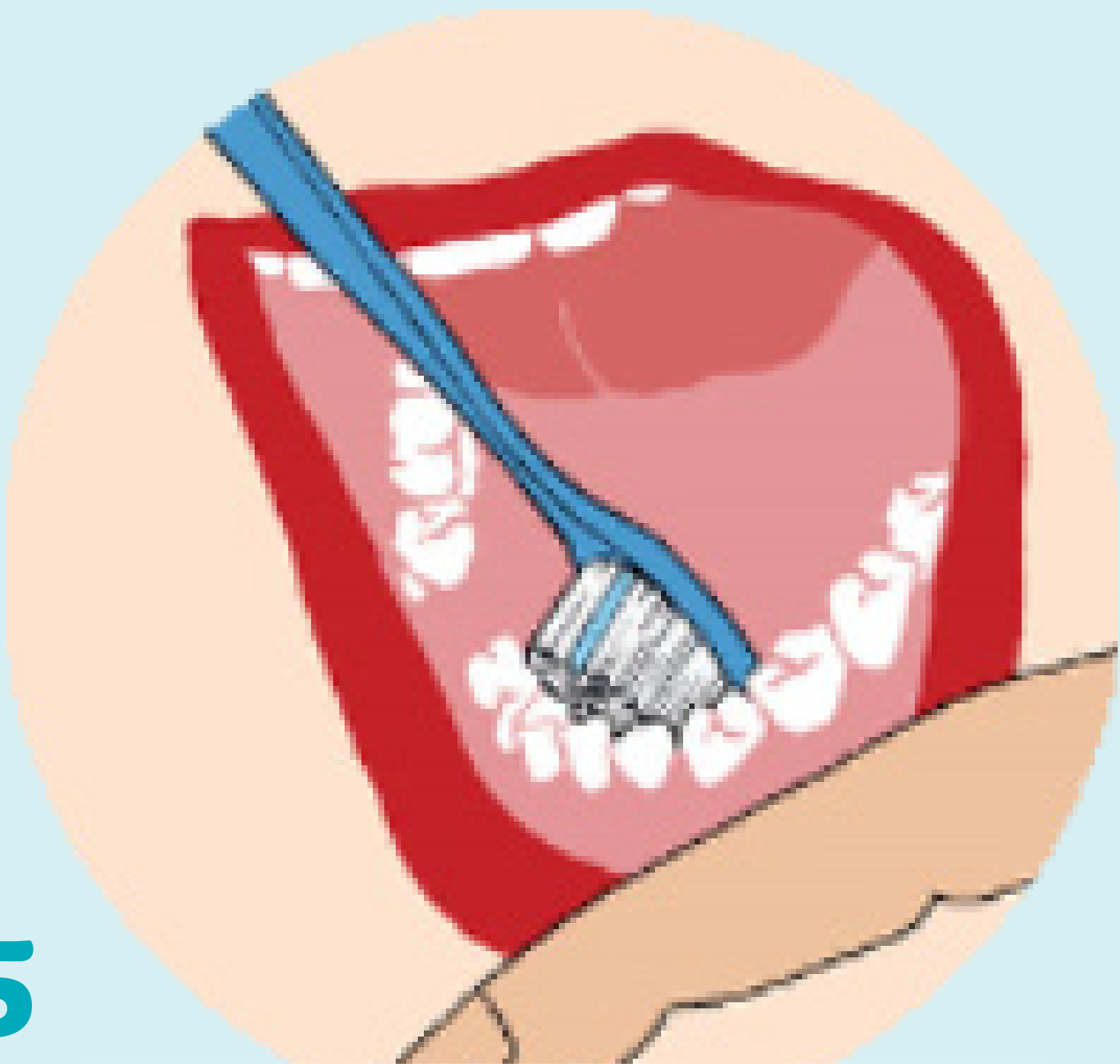


*front tooth
surfaces*



index

Brushing natural teeth: lower jaw



5

*back tooth
surfaces*



index

Brushing natural teeth: lower jaw



6

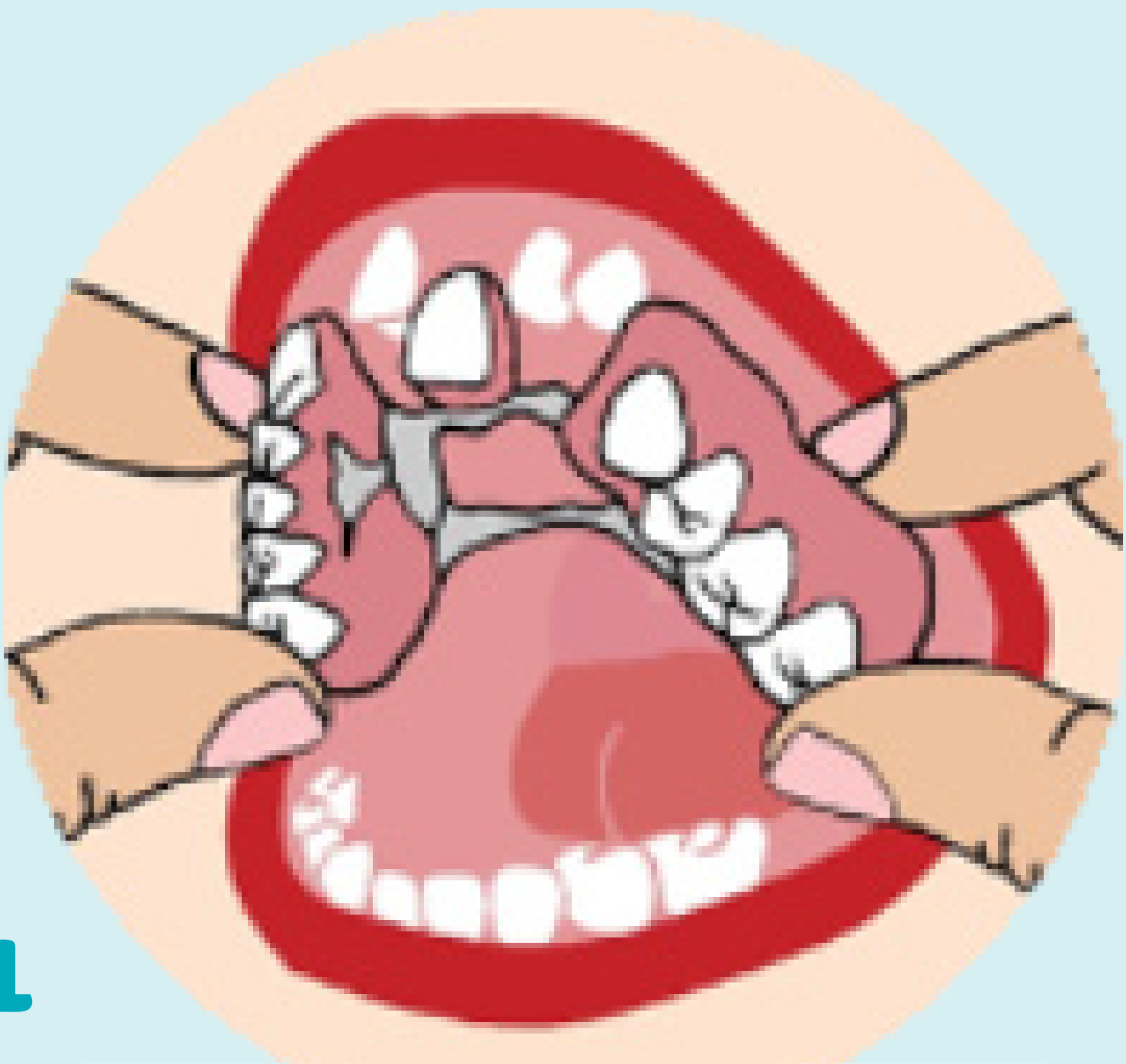
*use interdental brush
between all teeth and molars*

*missing teeth:
brush in between*



index

Brushing *Partial denture:* *upper jaw*



1

*remove frame or
plate*



index

Brushing *Partial denture:* *upper jaw*



2

brush inner
surfaces



index

Brushing

Partial denture: upper jaw



3

*brush outer
surfaces*



index

Brushing Partial denture: upper jaw



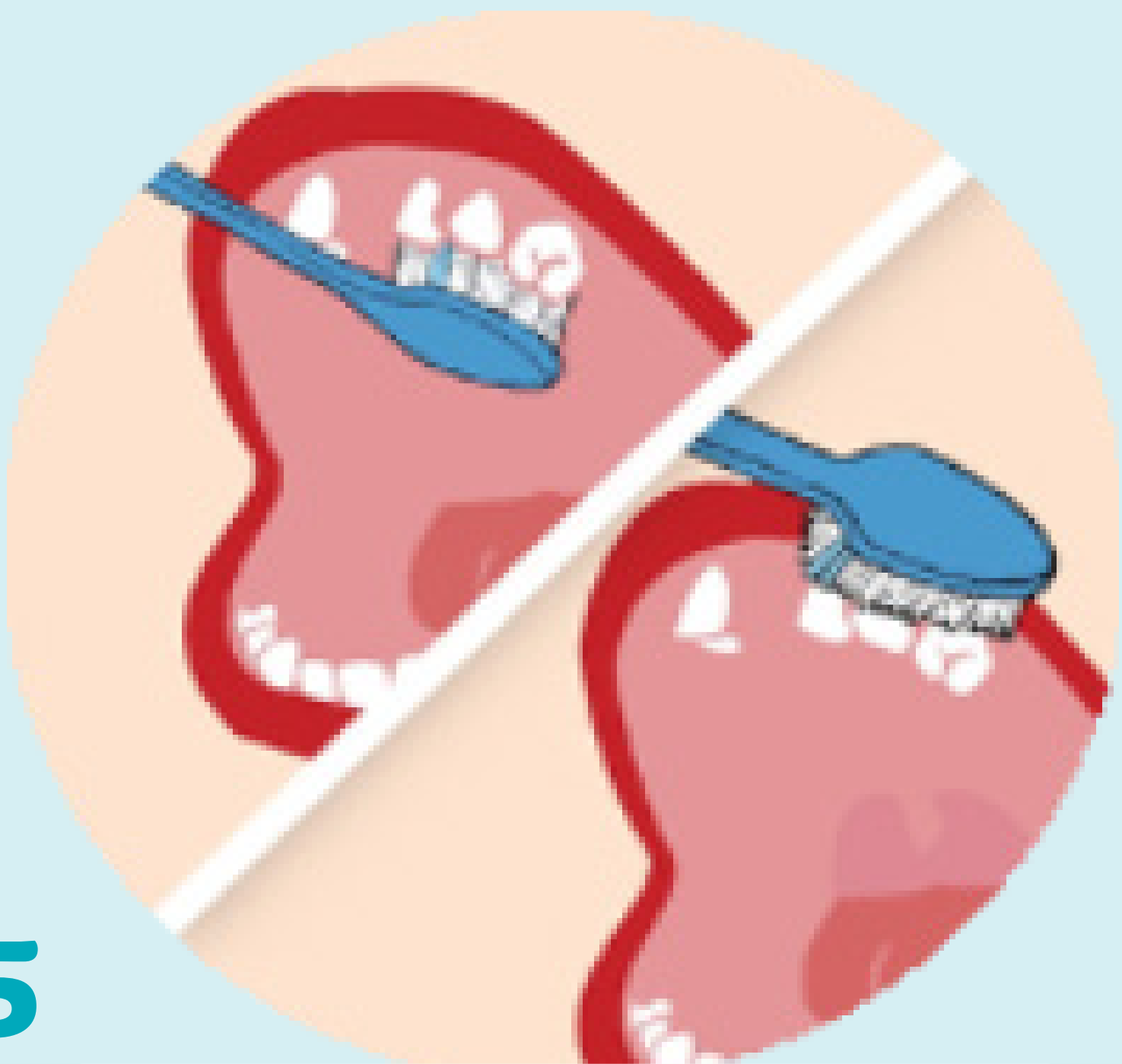
4

*store frame or plate
without water*



index

Brushing *Partial denture:* *upper jaw*



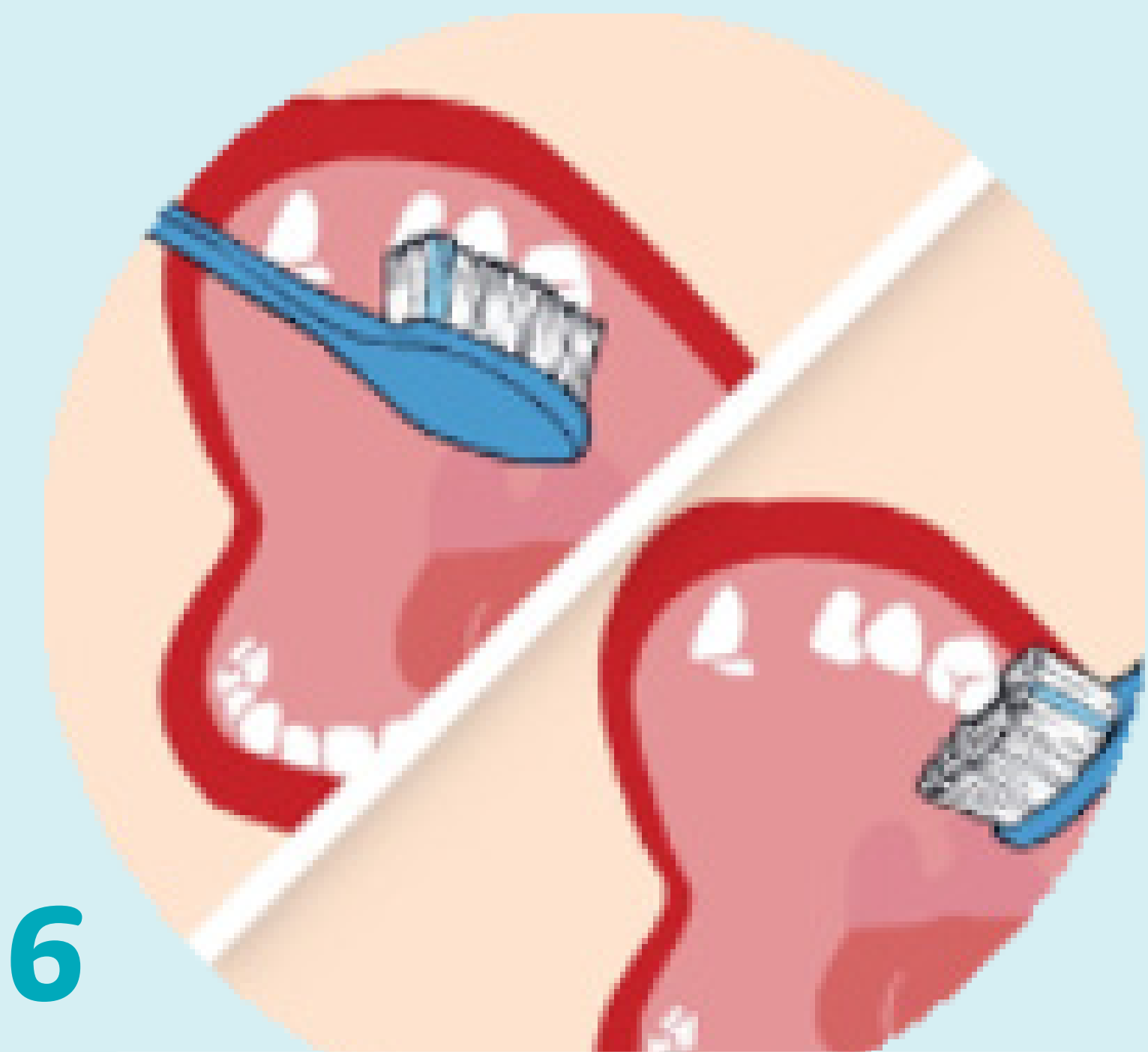
5

*brush inner and
outer surfaces*



index

Brushing *Partial denture:* *upper jaw*



6

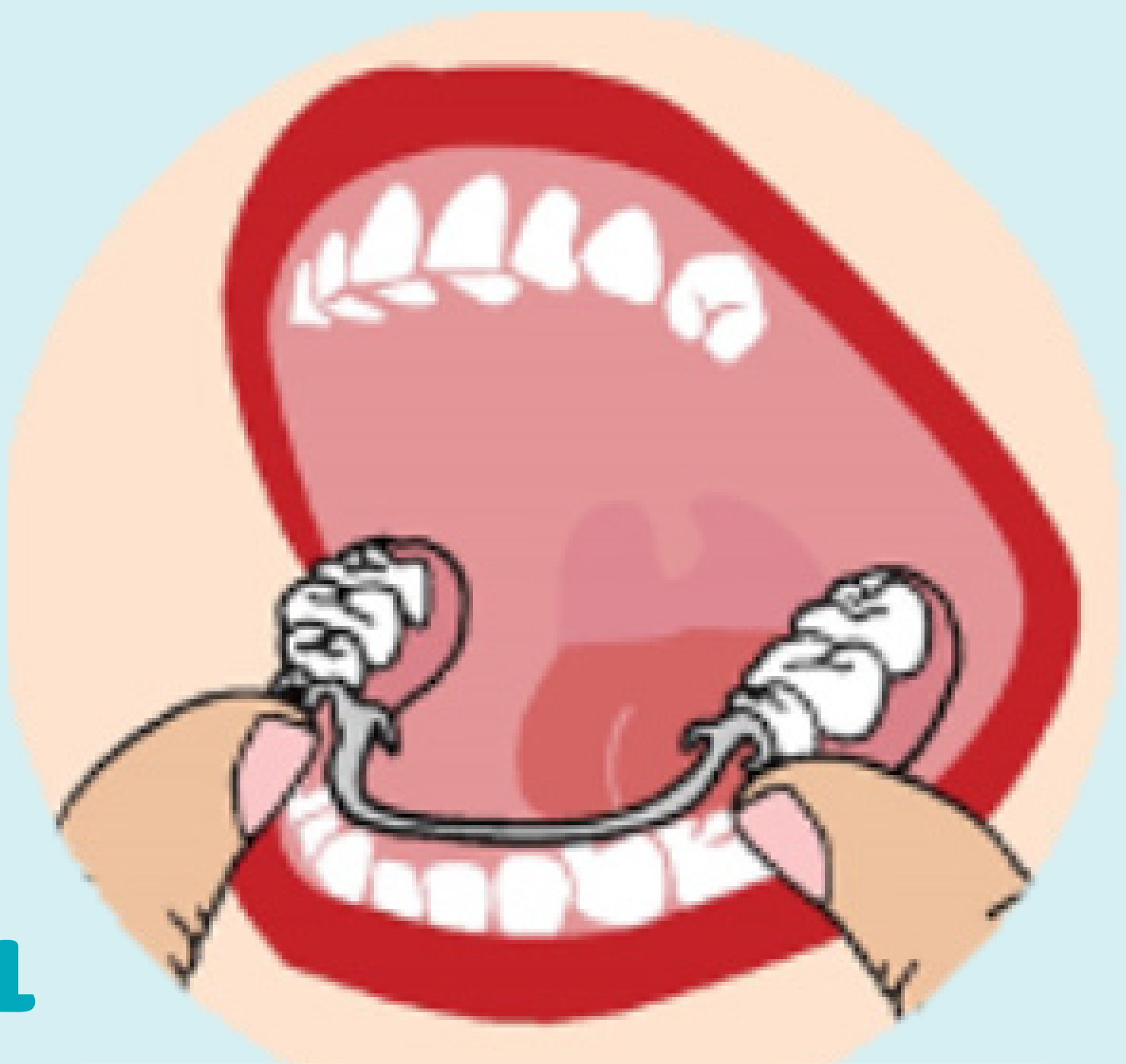
*brush upper and
rear surfaces*



[index](#)

Brushing Partial denture: lower jaw

1

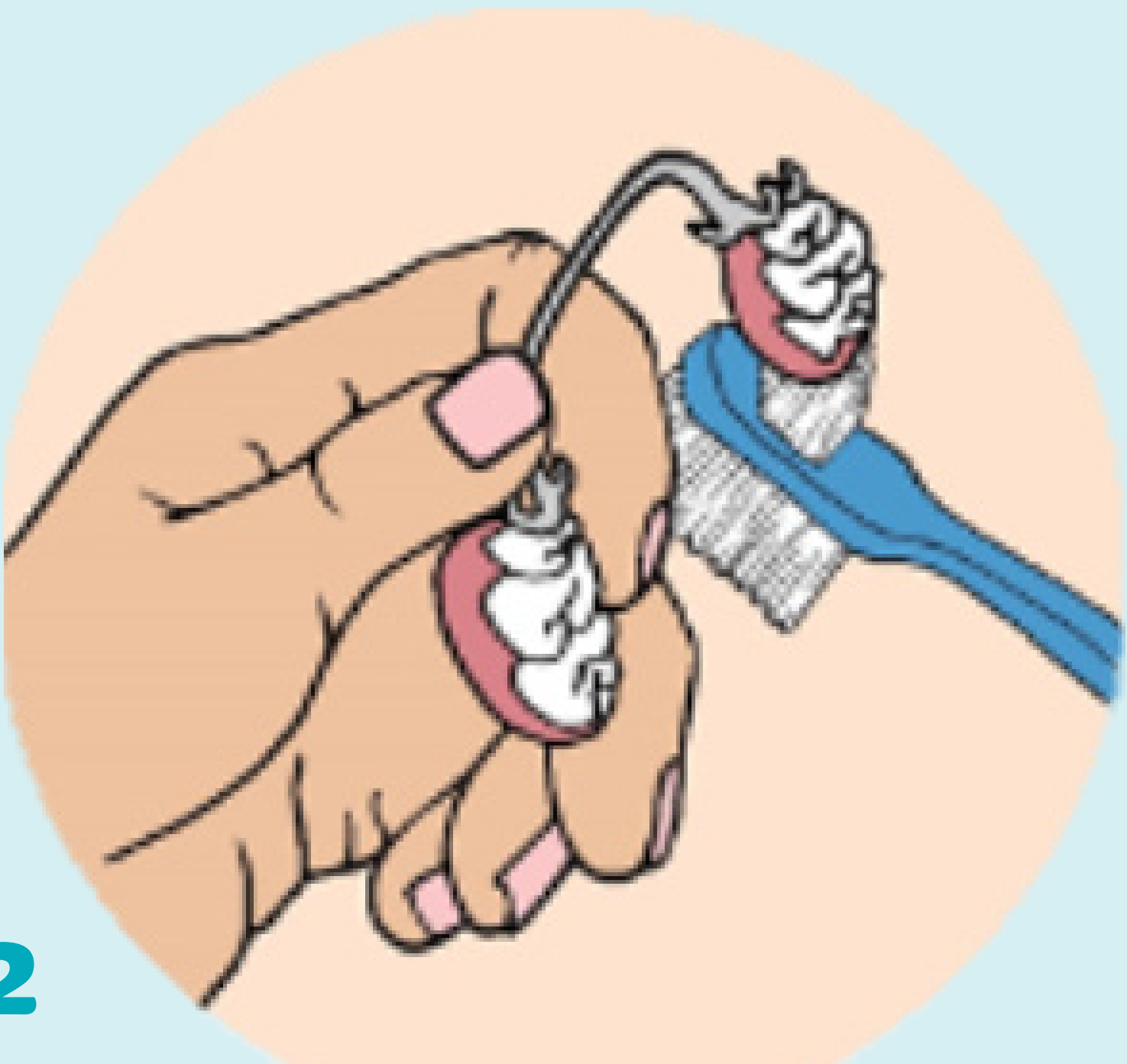


*remove frame or
plate*



[index](#)

Brushing Partial denture: lower jaw



2

*brush inner
surfaces*



[index](#)

Brushing Partial denture: lower jaw

**2X
Daily**

3



*brush outer
surfaces*

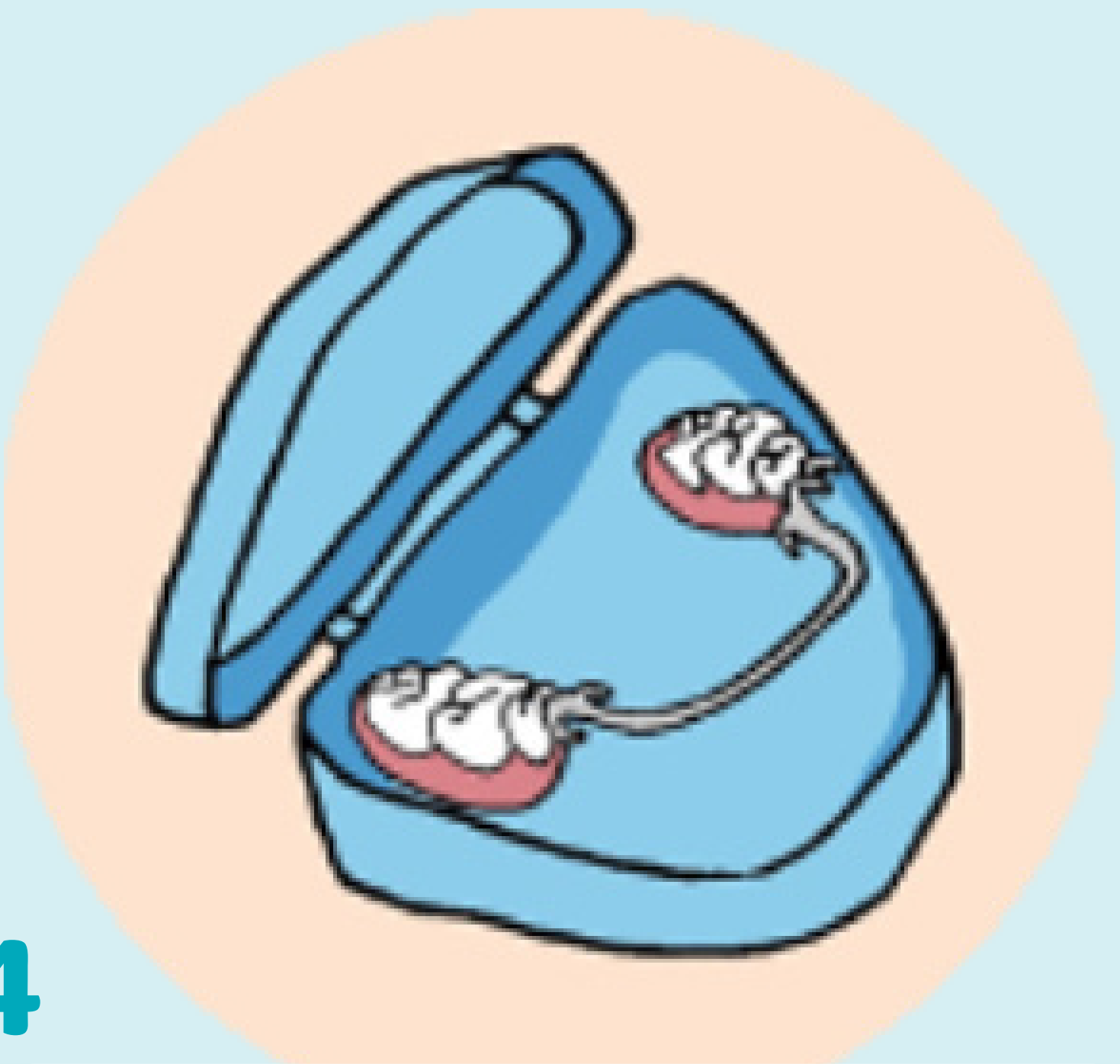


index

Brushing

Partial denture:

lower jaw



4

*store frame or plate
without water*

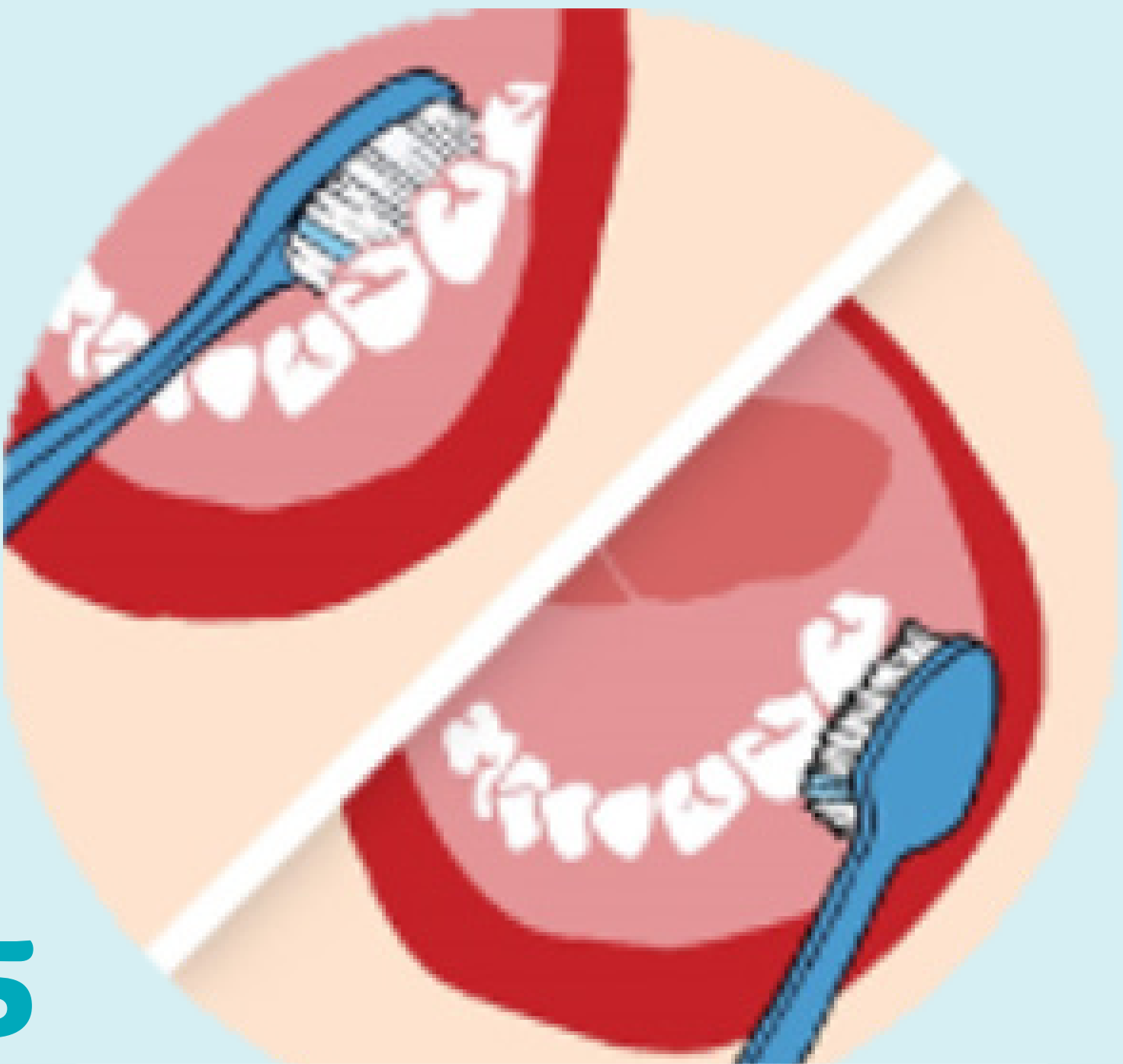


[index](#)

Brushing

Partial denture:

lower jaw



5

*brush inner and
outer surfaces*



index

Brushing Partial denture: lower jaw



*brush upper and
rear surfaces*



[index](#)

Brushing overdenture: upper jaw

1



remove denture



index

Brushing overdenture: upper jaw

2



*brush inner
surfaces*



index

Brushing overdenture: upper jaw

3

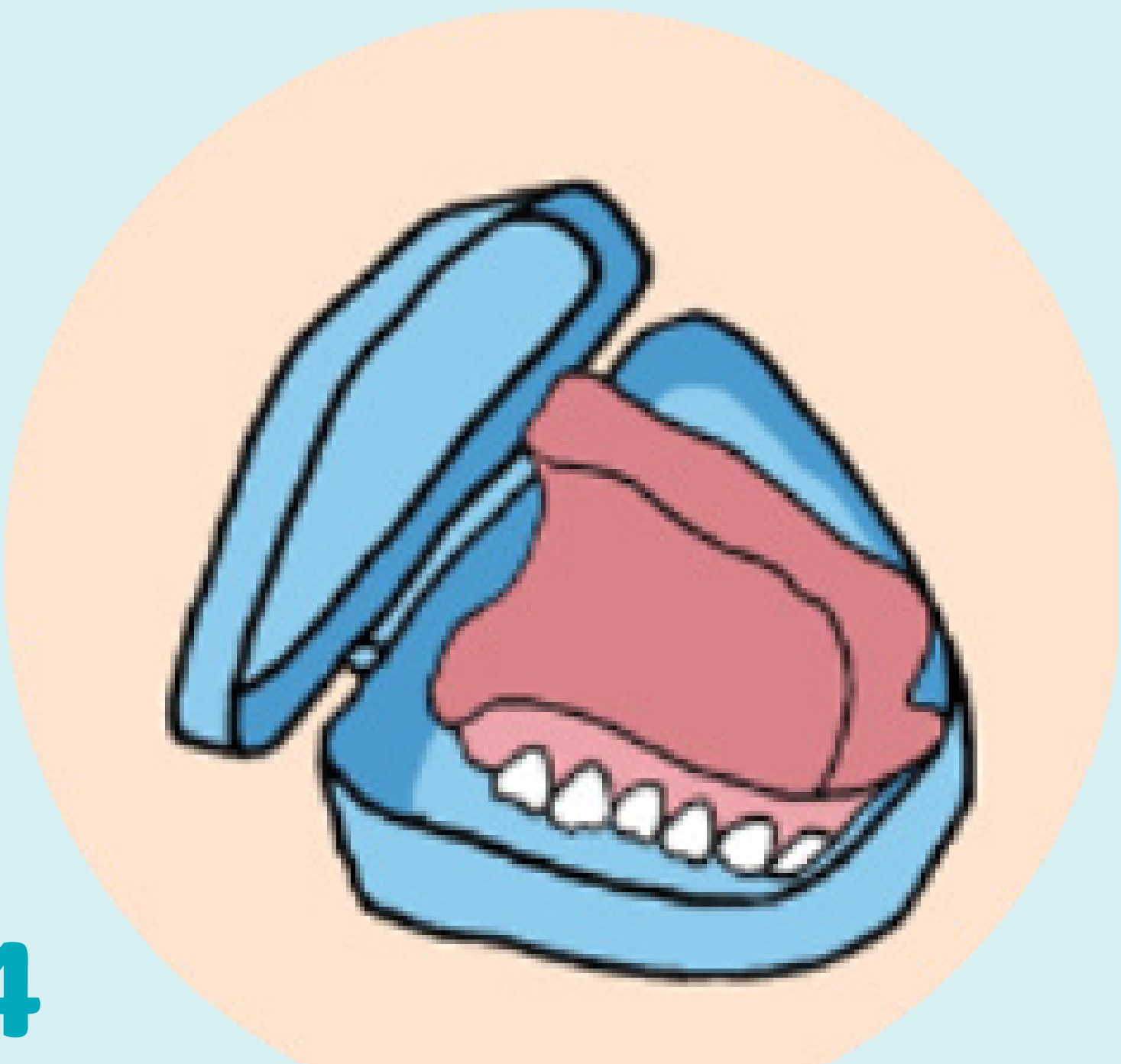


*brush outer
surfaces*



index

Brushing overdenture: upper jaw



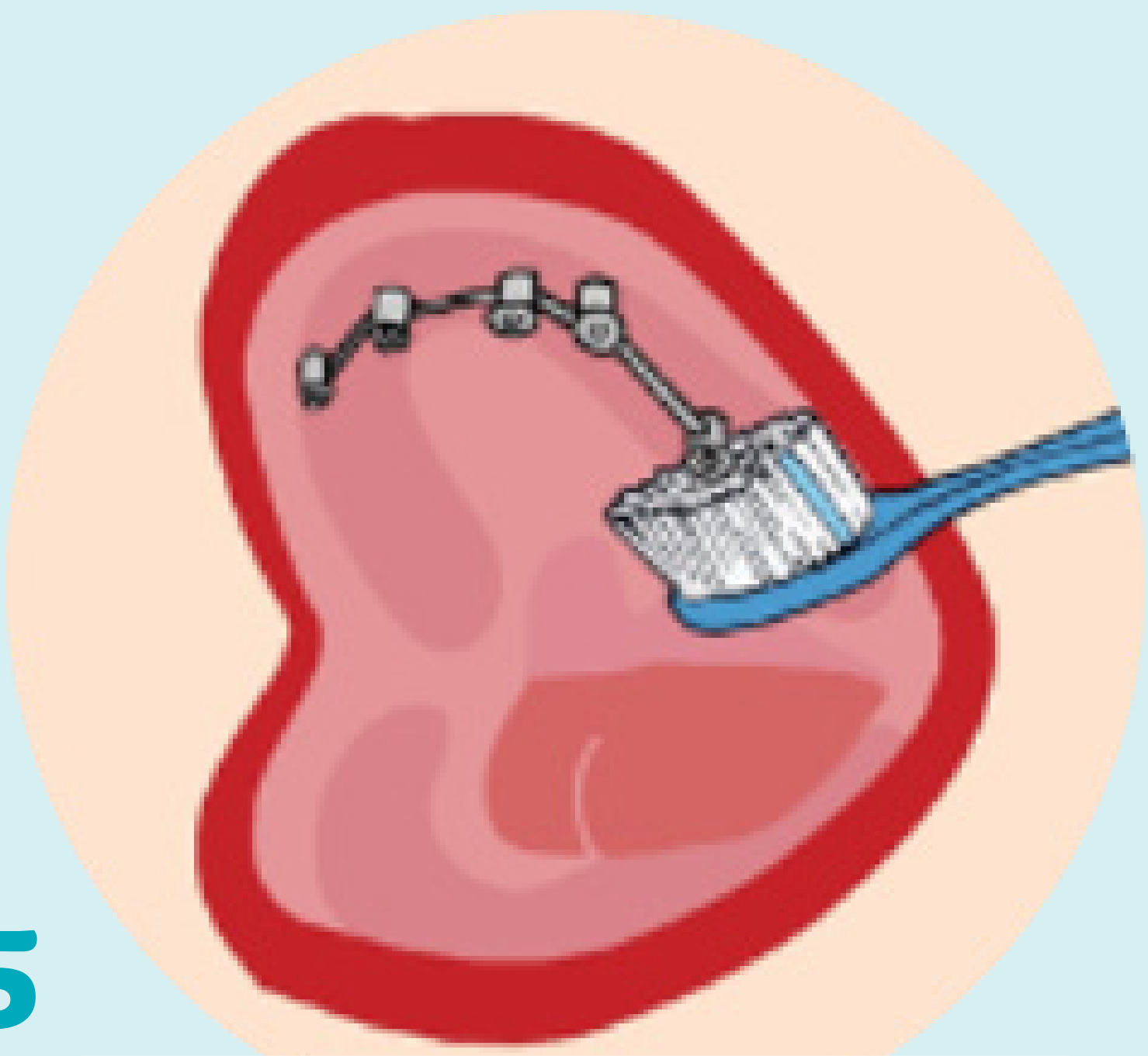
4

*store denture
without water*



index

Brushing overdenture: upper jaw



brush the frame



index

Brushing overdenture: upper jaw

1X
Daily

6



use interdental
brush



index

Brushing overdenture: lower jaw



1

remove denture



index

Brushing overdenture: lower jaw



2

*brush inner
surfaces*



index

Brushing overdenture: lower jaw

2X
Daily

3

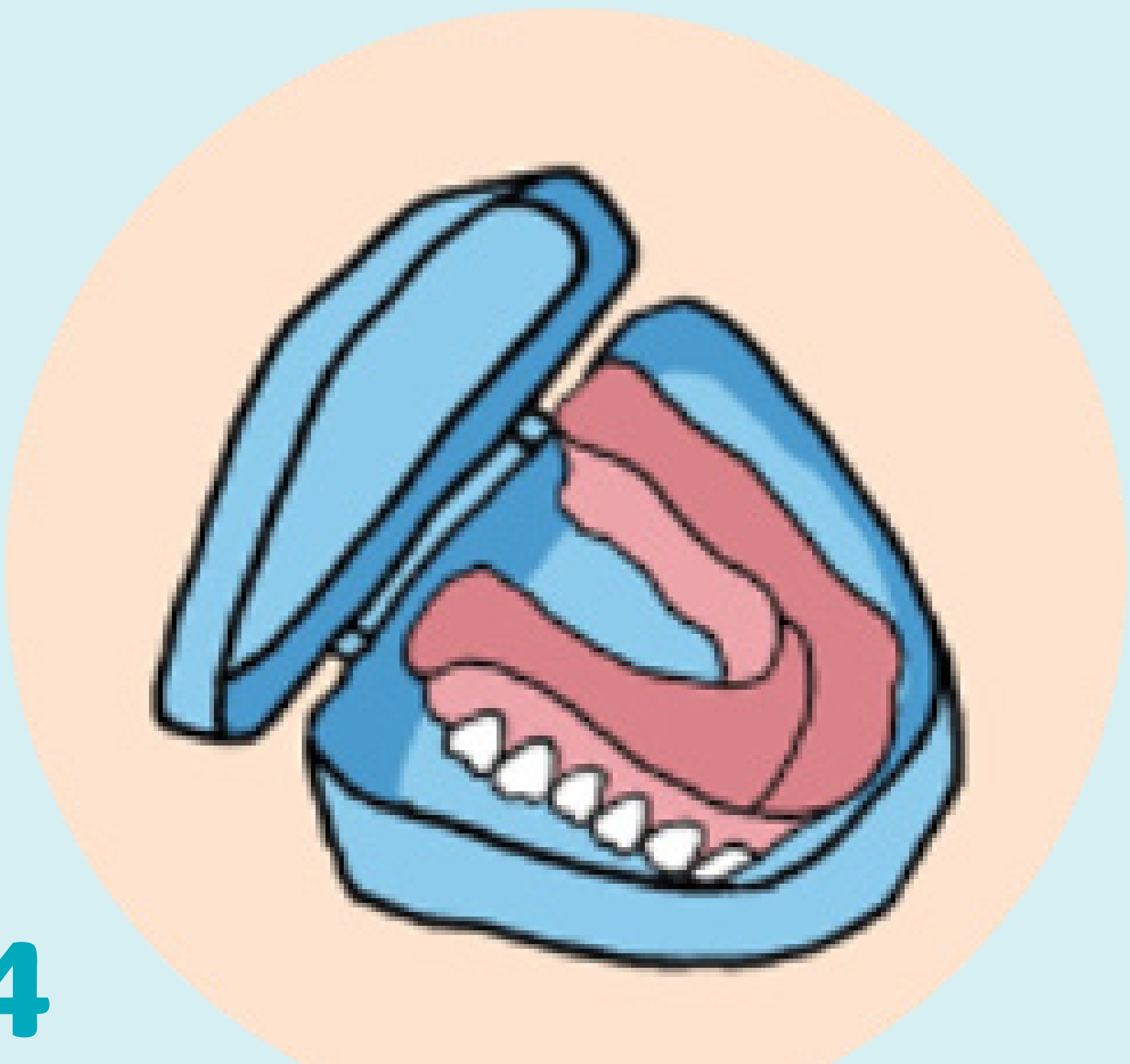


brush outer
surfaces



index

Brushing overdenture: lower jaw



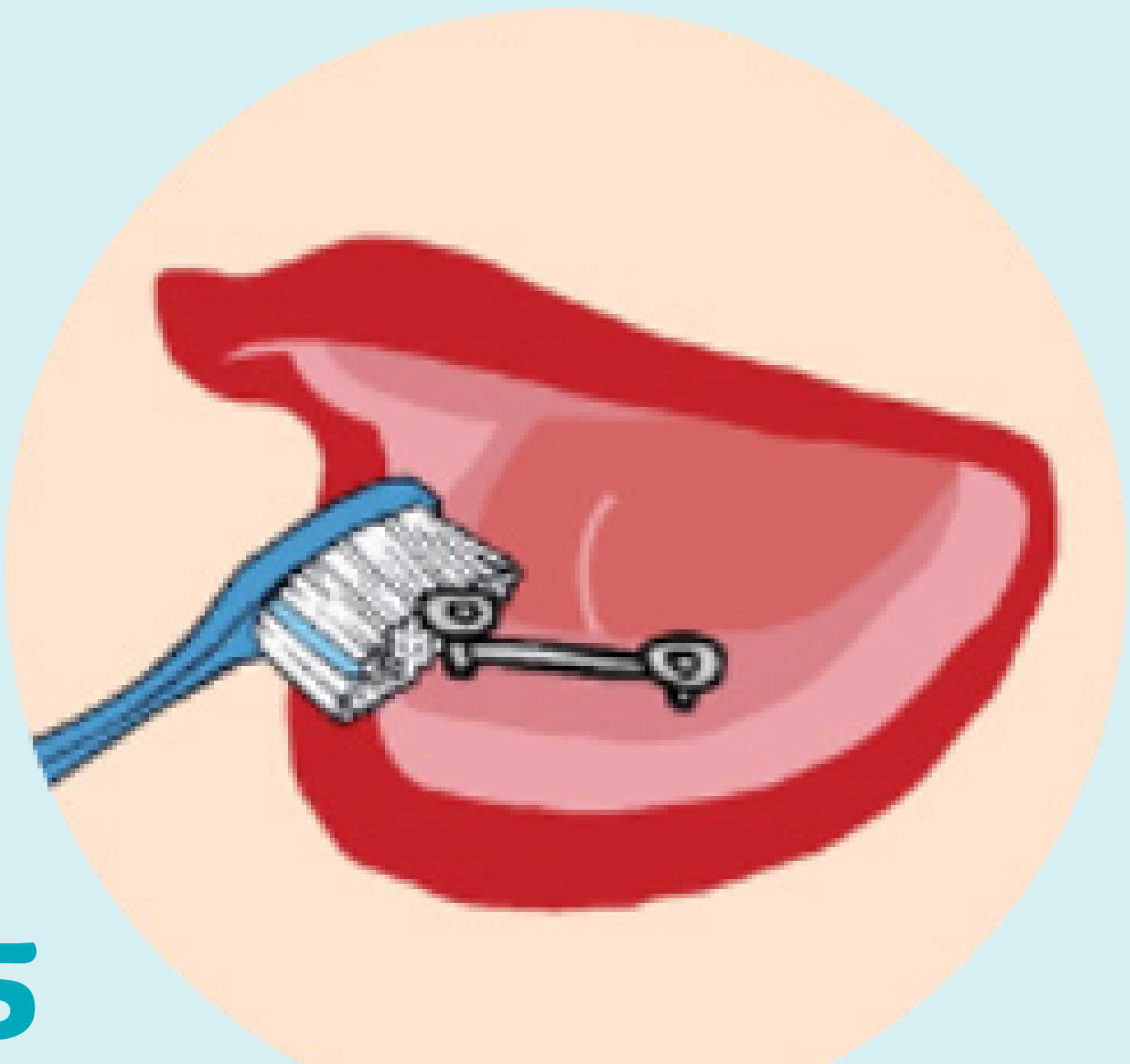
4

*store denture
without water*



index

Brushing overdenture: lower jaw



5

brush the frame



index

Brushing overdenture: lower jaw

**1X
Daily**

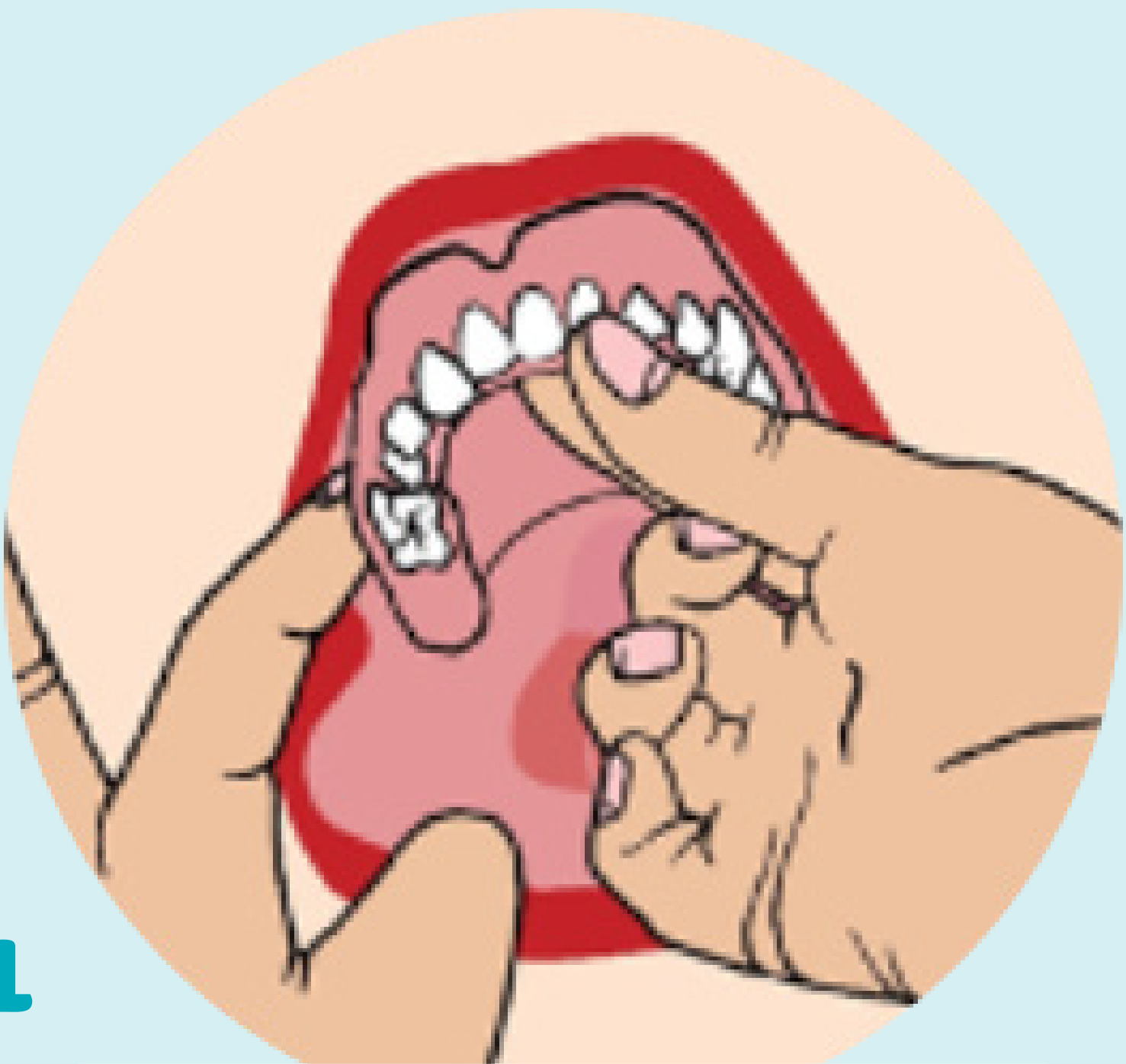
6

*use interdental
brush*



[index](#)

Brushing full denture: upper jaw



1

remove denture



index

Brushing full denture: upper jaw

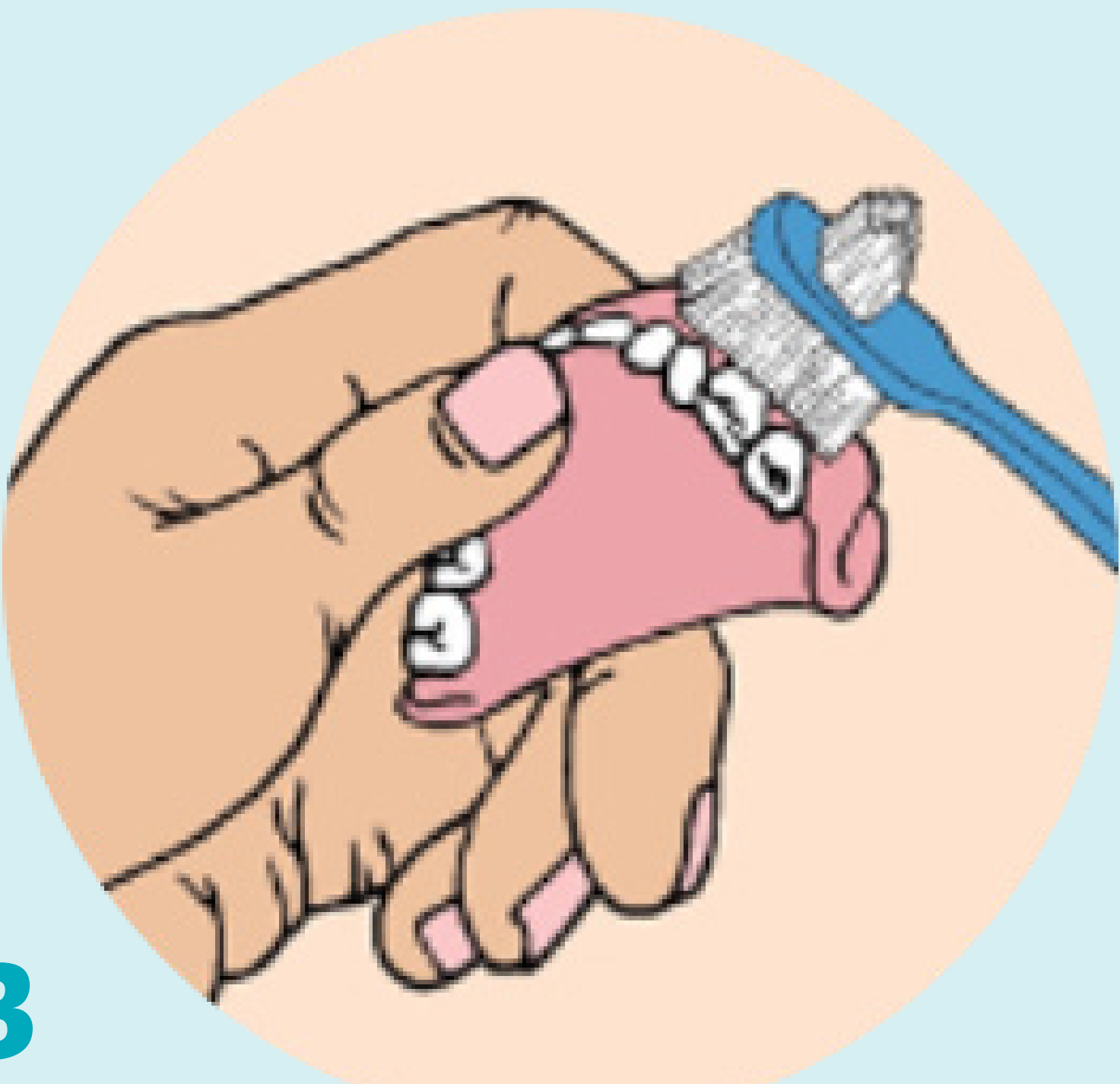


*brush inner
surfaces*



index

Brushing full denture: upper jaw



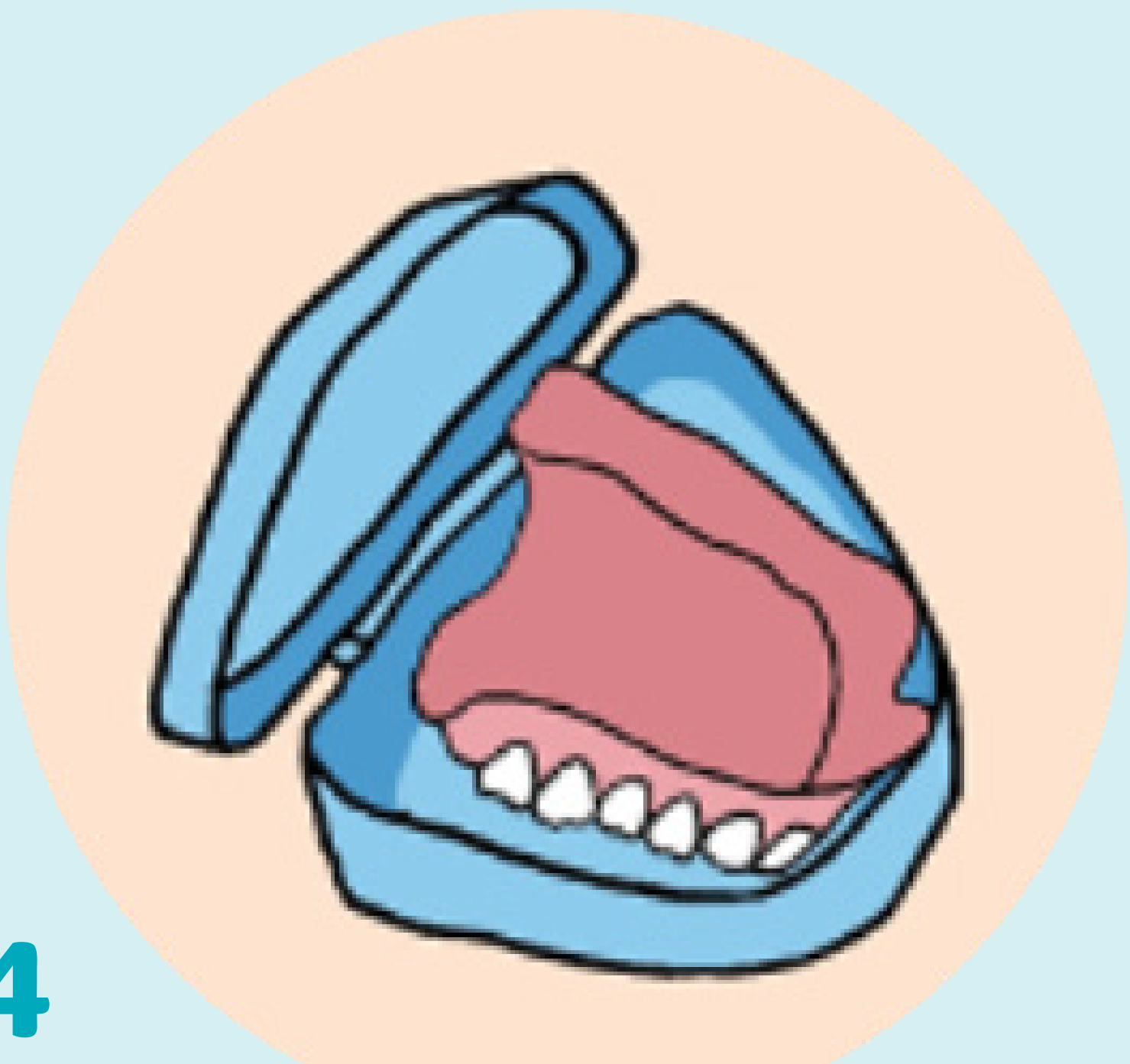
3

*brush outer
surfaces*



[index](#)

Brushing full denture: upper jaw



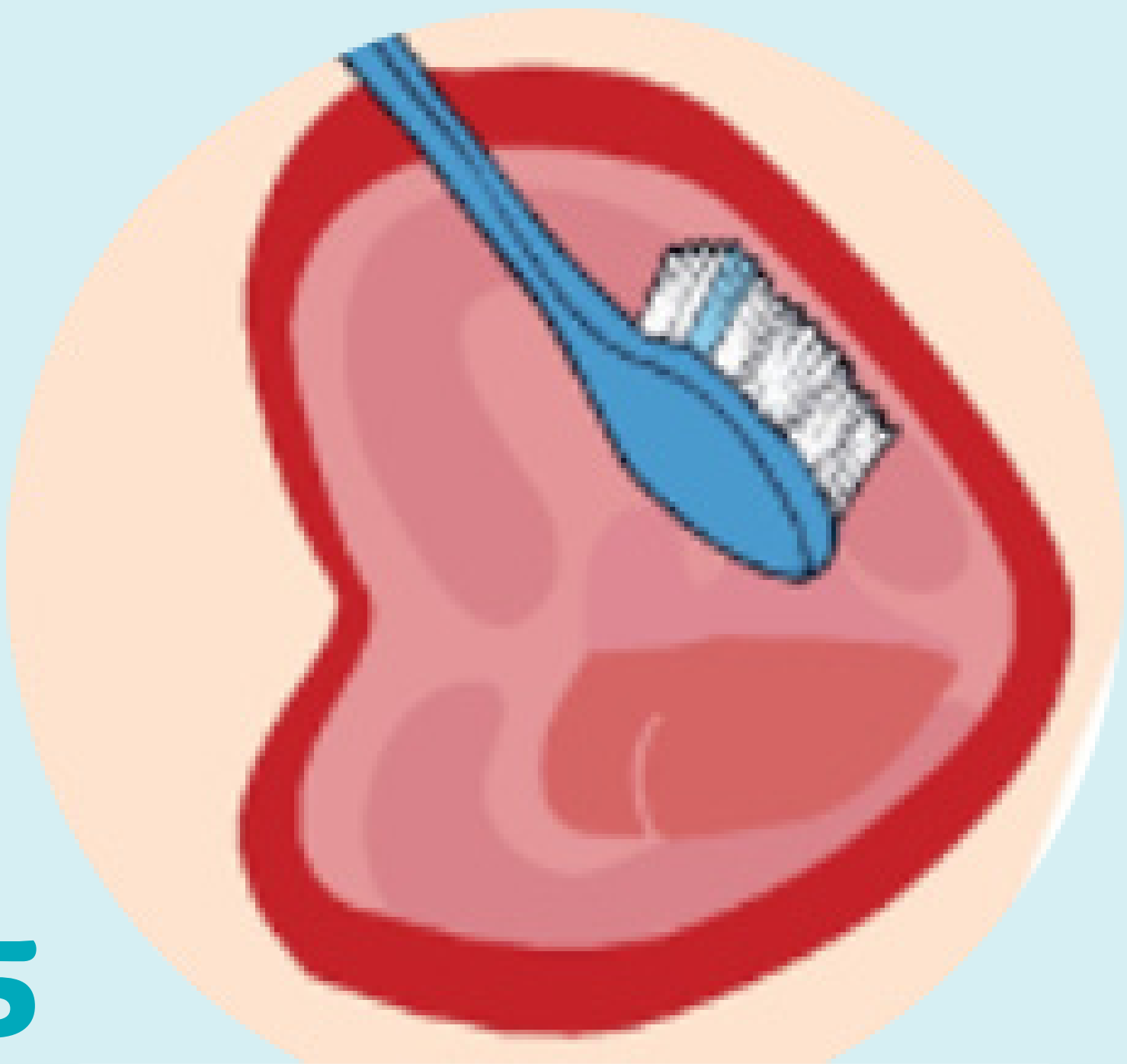
4

*store denture
without water*



index

Brushing full denture: upper jaw



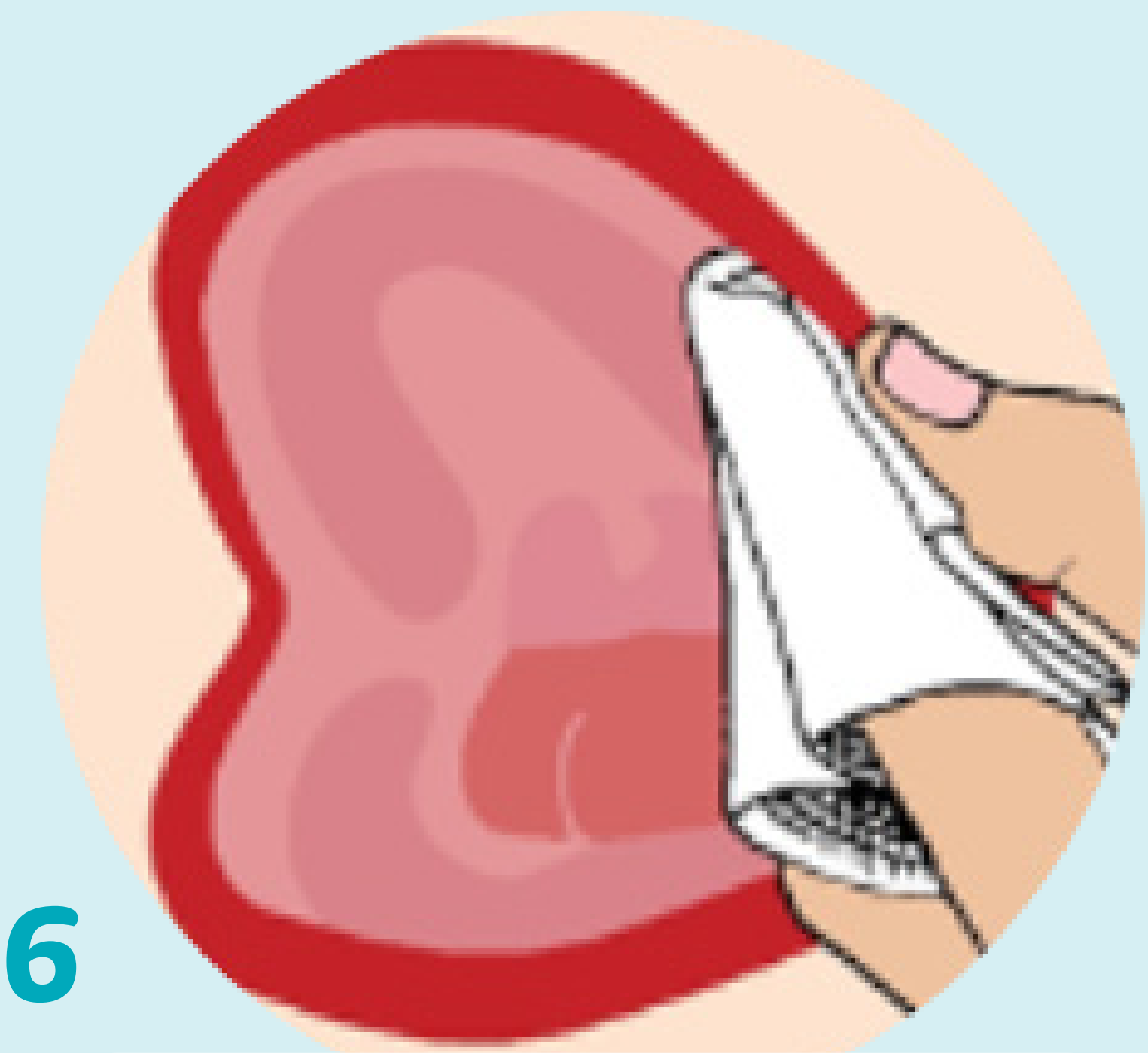
5

*cleanse jaw + palate
with a soft toothbrush
(unassisted)*



[index](#)

Brushing full denture: upper jaw

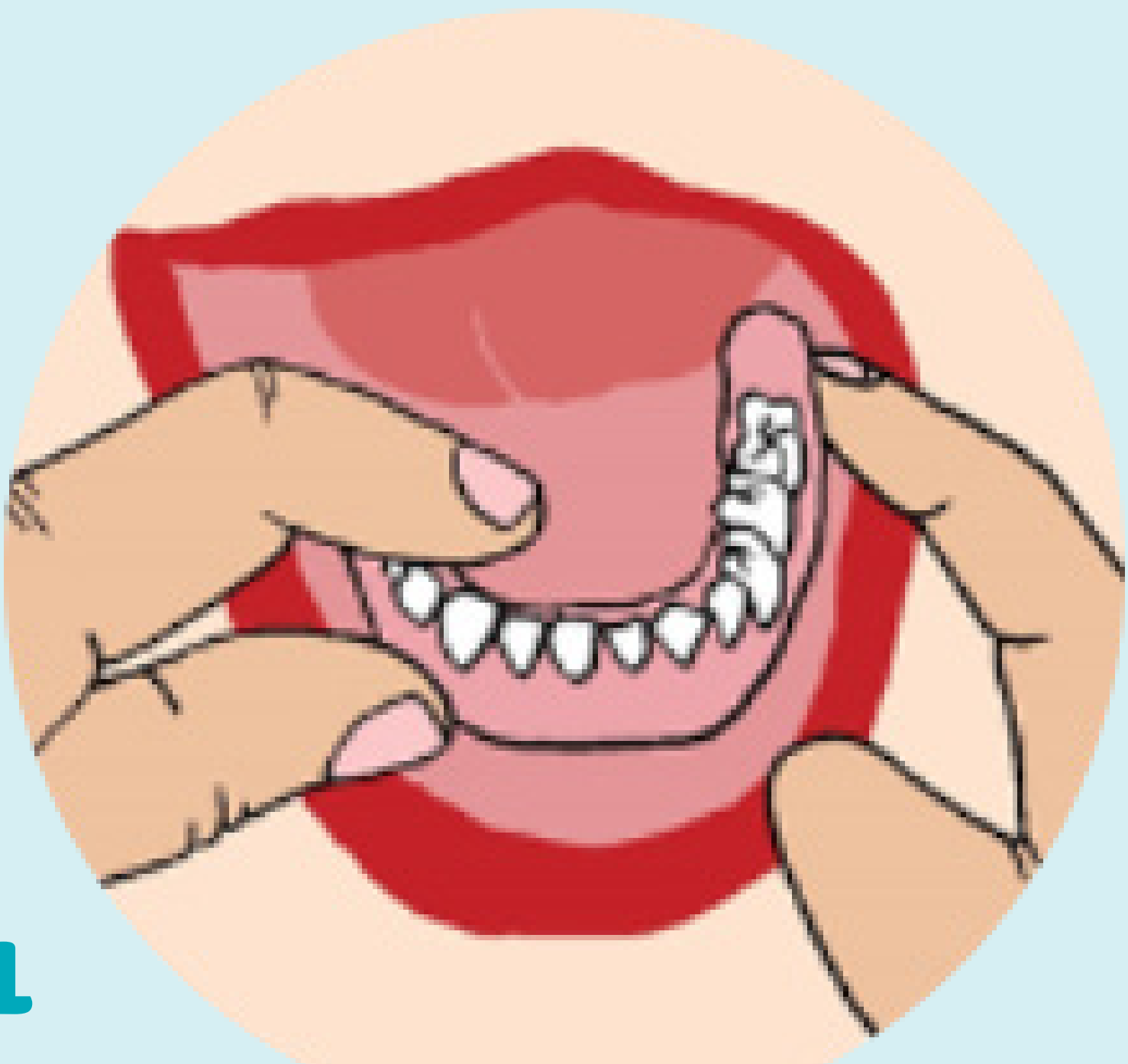


*cleanse jaw + palate
with a damp piece of
gauze (assisted)*



[index](#)

Brushing full denture: lower jaw



1

remove denture



index

Brushing full denture: lower jaw



2

*brush inner
surfaces*



index

Brushing full denture: lower jaw

2X
Daily

3

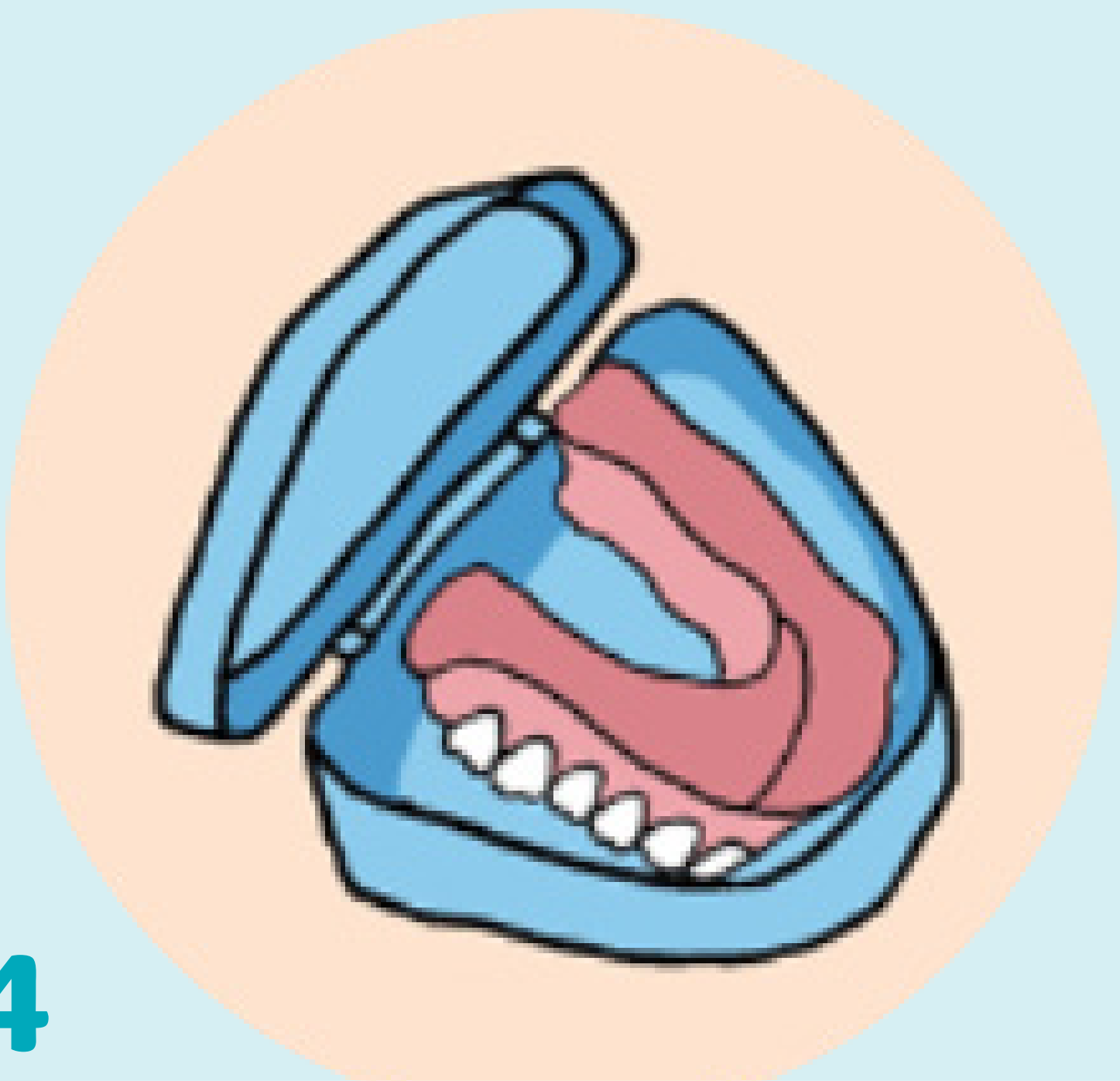


brush outer
surfaces



[index](#)

Brushing full denture: lower jaw



4

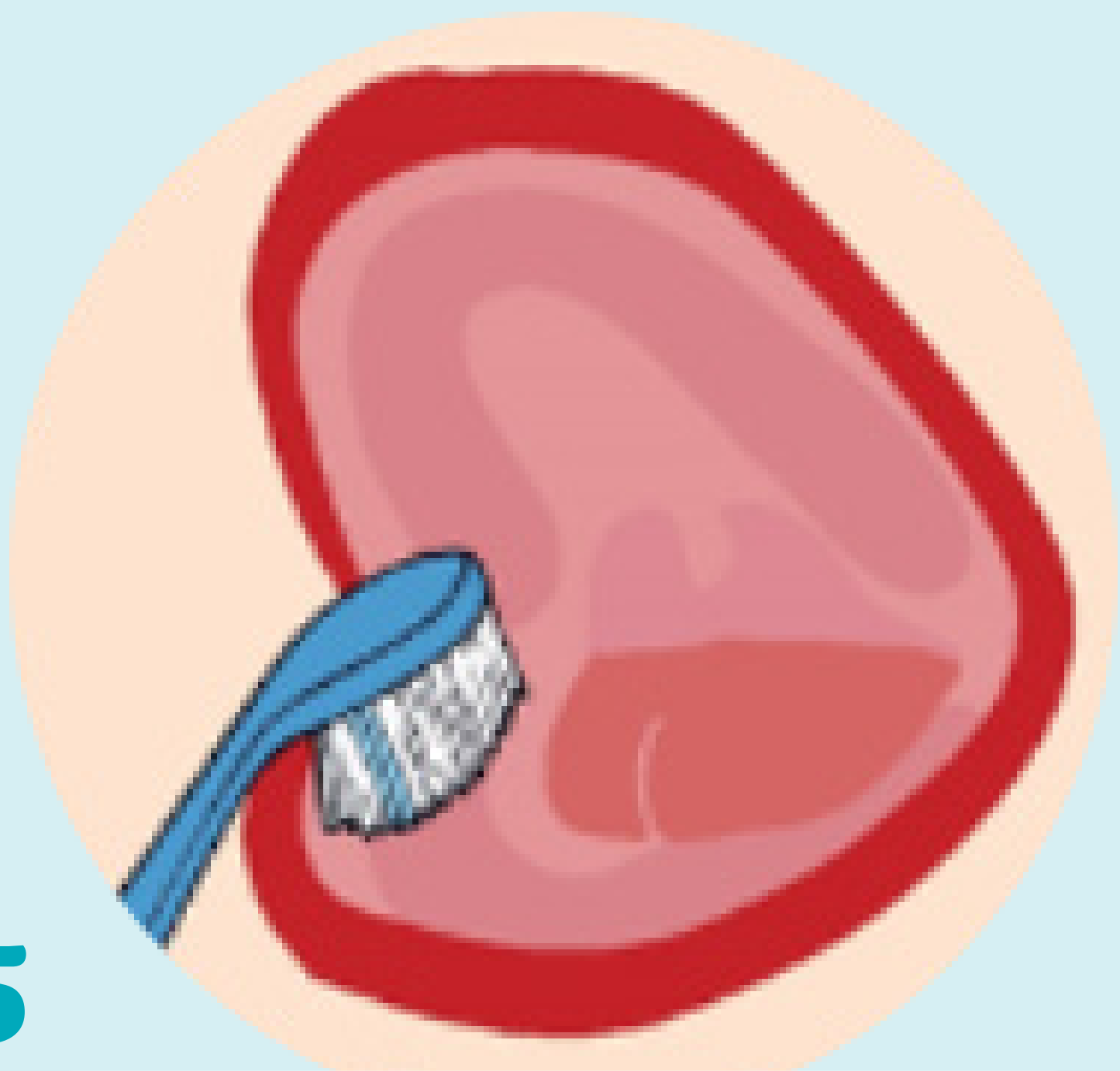
*store denture
without water*



[index](#)

Brushing full denture: lower jaw

5



*cleanse jaw + palate
with a soft toothbrush
(unassisted)*



[index](#)

Brushing full denture: lower jaw



*cleanse jaw + palate
with a damp piece of
gauze (assisted)*



index

Brushing Toothless mouth: unassisted

1

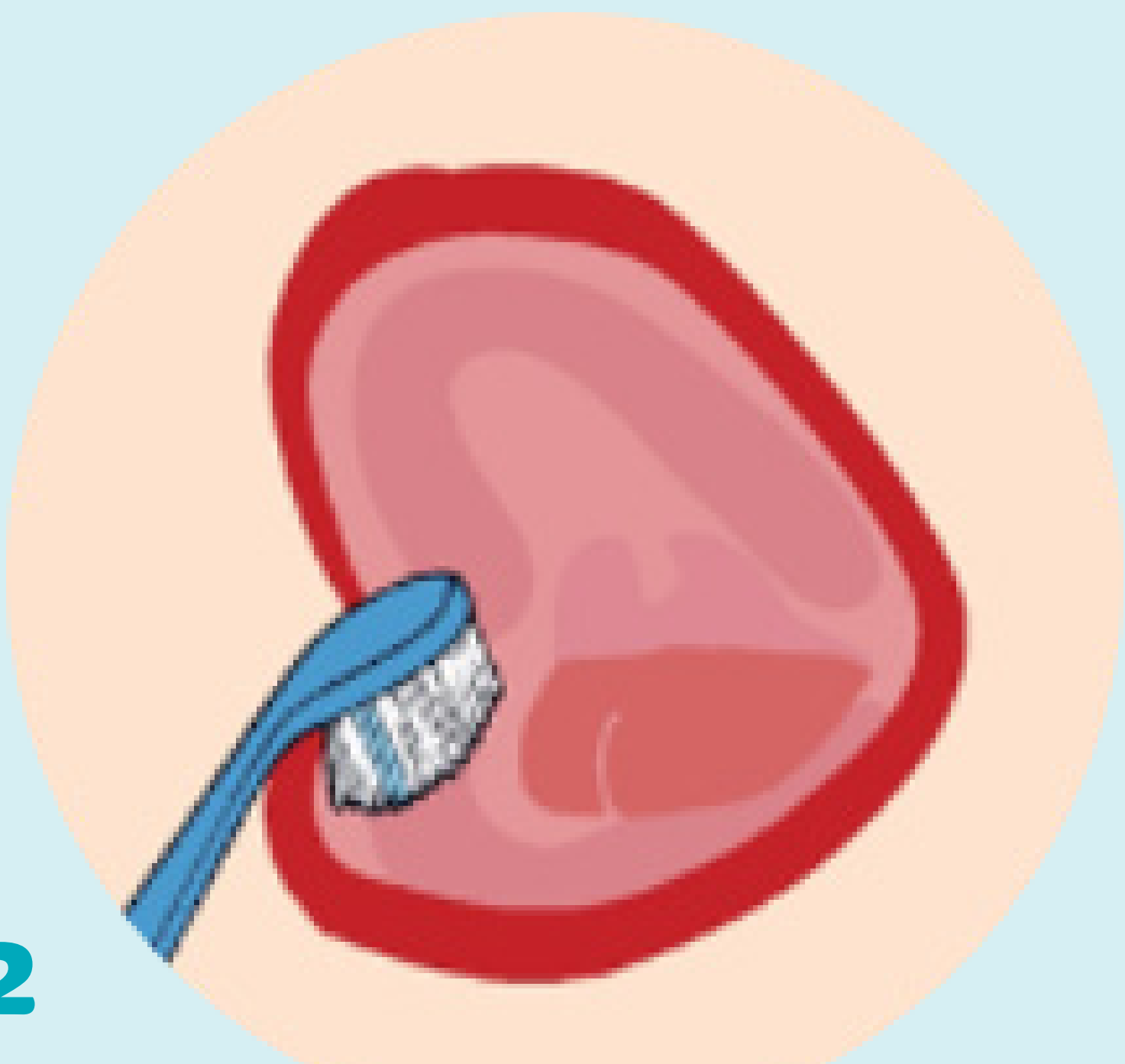
*cleanse upper jaw
with a soft toothbrush*



index

Brushing Toothless mouth: unassisted

2



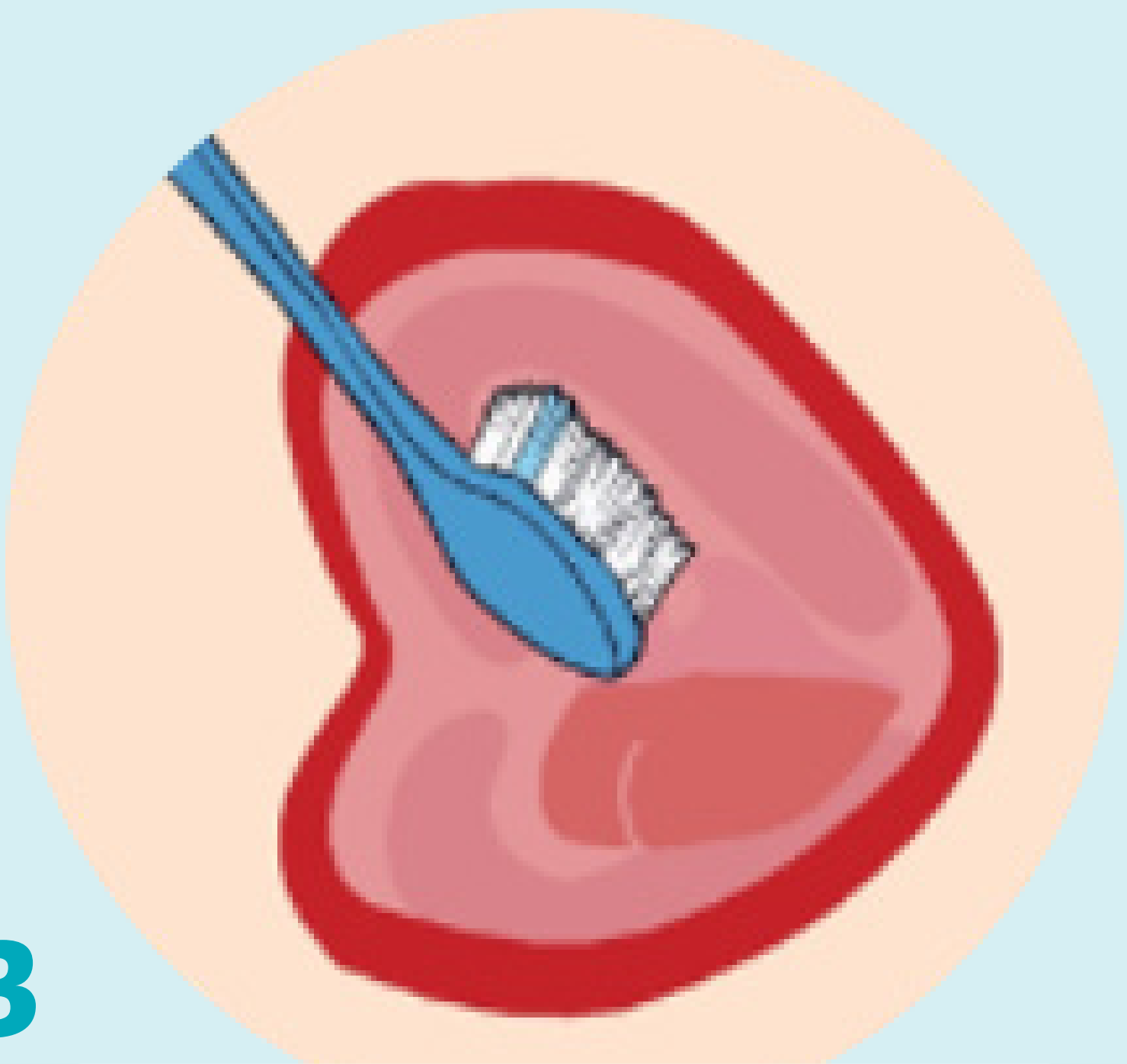
*cleanse lower jaw with
a soft toothbrush*



[index](#)

Brushing

Toothless mouth: unassisted



3

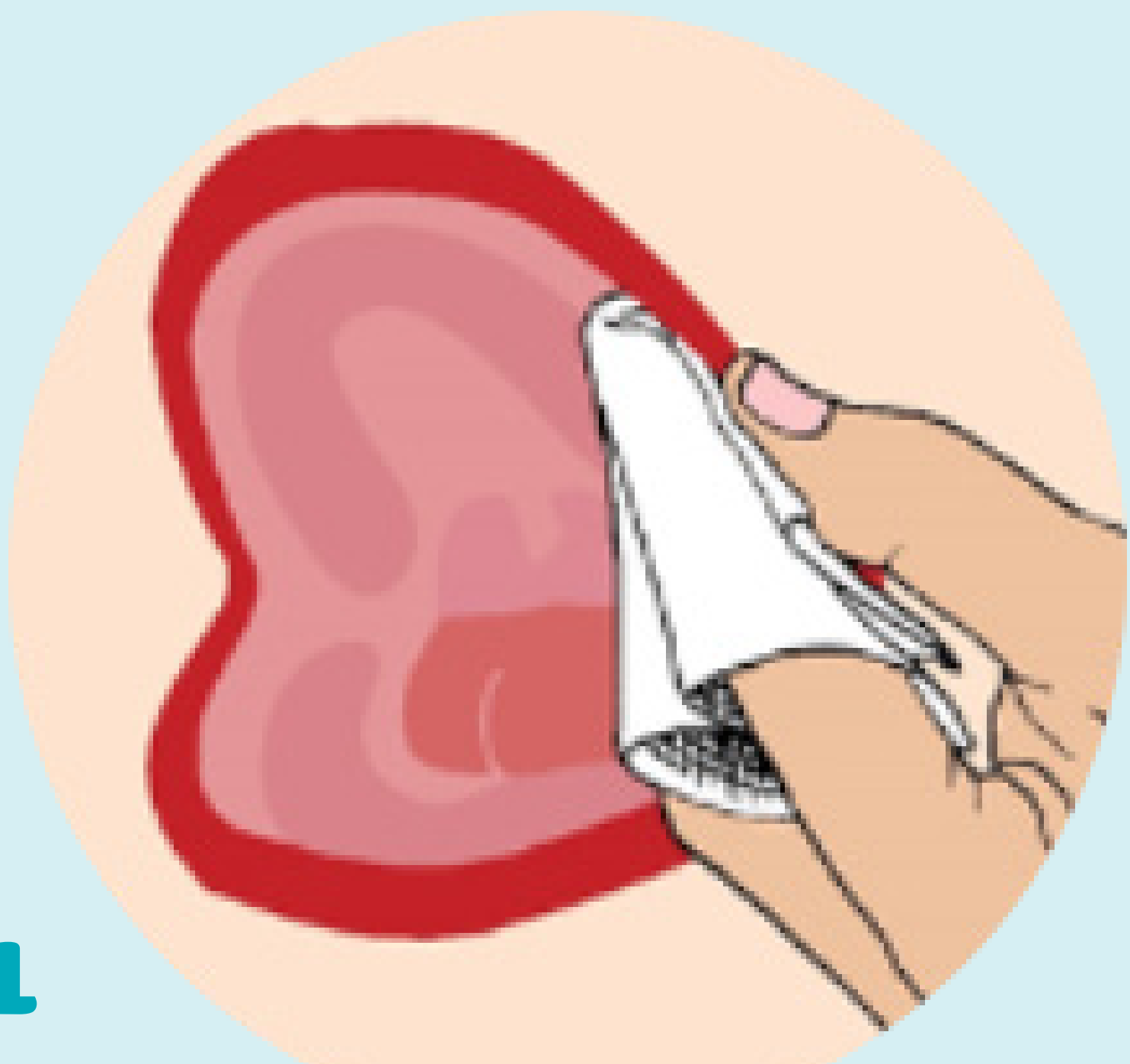
*cleanse palate and
inner cheeks*



[index](#)

Brushing Toothless mouth: Assisted

1



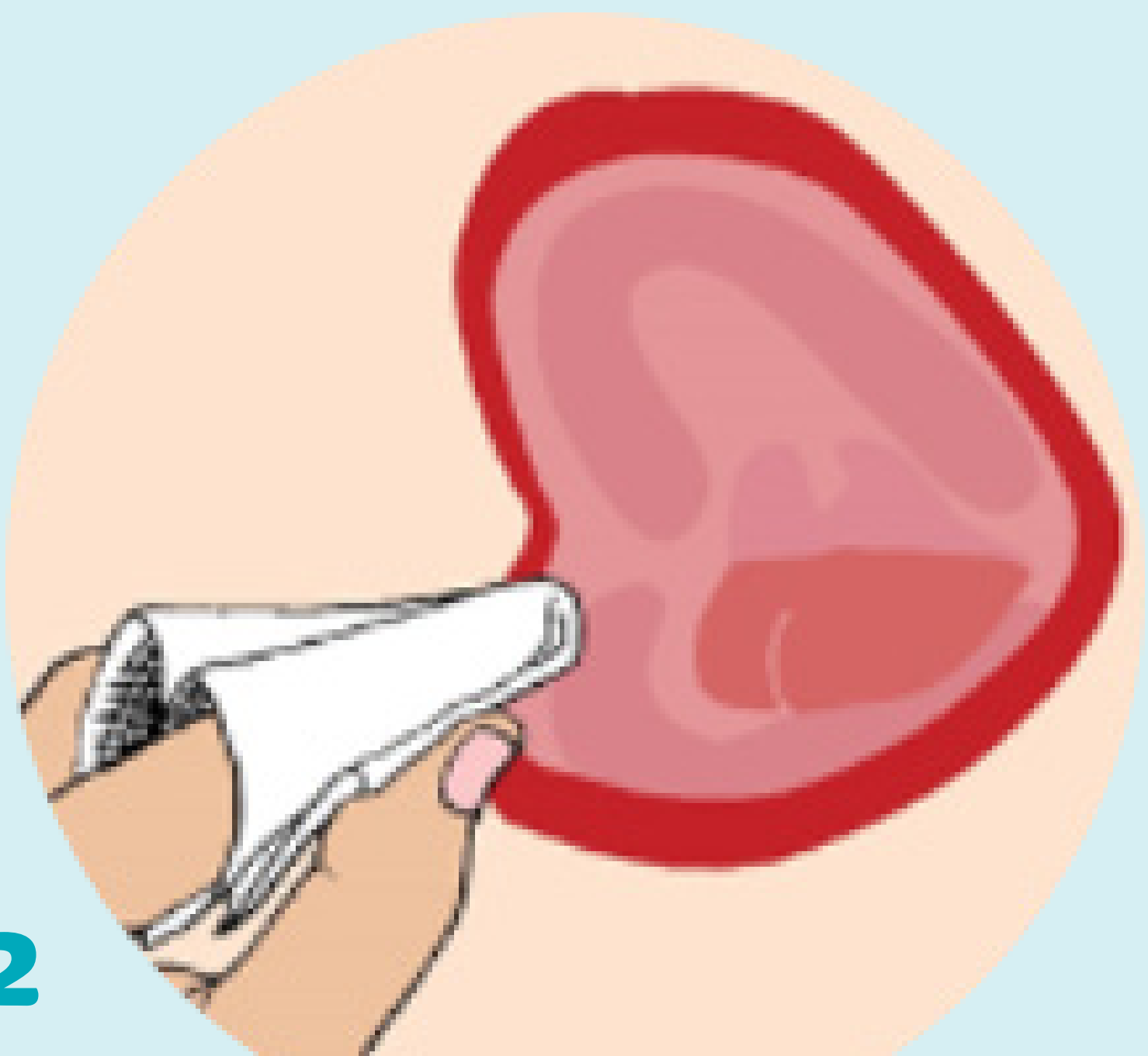
*cleanse upper jaw with
a damp piece of gauze*



index

Brushing Toothless mouth: Assisted

2



*cleanse lower jaw with
a damp piece of gauze*



[index](#)

Brushing

Toothless mouth:

Assisted

3



*cleanse palate and
inner cheeks*