



Mouth Care is a high priority for everyone, and even more so for those with chronic illnesses.

Proper mouth care has many benefits including:

1. Increasing appetite
2. Maintaining comfort
3. Clearer speech
4. Easier swallowing
5. Preventing sores and infection.

General tips:

Mouth care should be performed a minimum of twice daily and more frequently for dry mouth, if breathing through the mouth, or if you are not eating.

Mouth care should always be performed after using an inhaler/nebulizer to prevent thrush. Thrush is slightly raised white patches or a rash typically seen on the tongue or inner cheeks. There may be pain with swallowing. Contact your hospice nurse immediately if you suspect thrush.

Dentures may no longer fit well. You may consider using them only when eating or when visiting with friends and family.

Questions or concerns?

Call a hospice nurse at 513-891-7700.

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Relieving dry mouth:

1. Increase frequency of mouth care.
2. Encourage sucking on candy, ice chips, popsicles or taking small sips of water to increase saliva.
3. Use of a mouthwash can increase dryness. Talk to your nurse about a proper mouth moisturizer/artificial saliva product.

For those with difficulty swallowing:

- Raise the head of the bed and support the head with pillows, turn head to one side.
- Cover the upper body with a towel to keep the area clean and dry.
- Remove dentures prior to mouth care and brush separately.
- Use a toothette, which is a sponge-tipped oral swab, to clean the mouth and teeth using a small amount of toothpaste.
- Remove extra fluid/toothpaste with a clean towel.
- Use an appropriate mouth freshener or moisturizer recommended by your nurse.



Mouth care for those who are not responsive:

- It's a good idea to provide mouth care 30 minutes before liquid medications is given to allow for the medications to be absorbed.
- Also, wait 30 minutes after medications are given before performing mouth care.
- Lift head of bed and turn head to the side to prevent liquid from going down the back of the throat.
- Cover the upper body with a towel to maintain cleanliness.
- Dip a toothette—a sponge-tipped oral swab—into water and squeeze the excess.
- Apply a small amount of mouth moisturizer to the sponge of a toothette.

Important note:

- If using oxygen, only use water-based products such as HOC mouth moisturizer or KY jelly for the mouth or lips.
- DO NOT use Vaseline or other petroleum-based products.

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