

Oral Care DURING Cancer Treatment



Cancer treatments can reduce saliva production



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Dental concerns should be looked after prior to cancer treatment, and residents must be made aware of the dental complications of cancer treatments.

Cancer treatments can cause a decrease in white blood cells (which help the body fight infection) and platelets (which helps the blood to clot).

When these blood counts are low, use an ultra soft toothbrush, be very gentle when brushing, and avoid flossing to prevent bleeding. No professional dental treatment should be performed at this time.

WHEN PROVIDING ORAL CARE...

Mouth problems can arise during cancer treatment such as canker sores, dry mouth, bleeding, thrush, changes in taste and appetite, and development of cavities due to dry mouth

- 1) Brush teeth at least 2X per day using an ultra soft brush
- 2) Brush after taking liquid medications as they may contain sugar
- 3) Rinse with water after vomiting; do not brush for at least 30 minutes because the enamel is soft
- 4) Rinse with non-alcoholic antibacterial mouth rinse
- 5) Apply a fluoride gel or mouth rinse gel once a day and do not rinse for 30 minutes
- 6) Keep the mouth and lips moist (do not use petroleum jelly)
- 7) Use saliva substitutes, gum, rinse, & toothpaste as tolerated

- T**
- ☞ Avoid sweet drinks and sugary snacks - SUGAR FREE CHEWING GUM IS GOOD TO INCREASE SALIVA FLOW
- I**
- ☞ Watch fruit drinks - they have a high concentration of sugar and acid which can damage the teeth
- P**
- ☞ Drink milk, or water - teas and coffee can dry out the mouth
- S**
- ☞ Brush and/or rinse before bed

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