

MOUTH CARE GUIDELINES

Mouth care is an essential part of your daily hygiene. It contributes to your comfort and helps to prevent infection.

It must be done a minimum of four times a day:

1. **MORNING**
2. **NOON**
3. **LATE AFTERNOON**
4. **AT BEDTIME**

You may do mouth care more often for your comfort. The nursing staff may also instruct you to do oral care more frequently based on the severity of your mucositis (mouth sores).

Chemotherapy or radiation can cause mucositis. The cells that line the mouth grow very rapidly and therefore are sensitive to the chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Frequent oral care helps keep this lining clean and free from infection. This reduces your risk of larger infections and helps reduce discomforts such as burning. As your white cells begin to return, your mouth will heal.

MOUTH CARE INSTRUCTIONS

You should use a pediatric soft toothbrush to help reduce the risk of bleeding and infection while your platelet and white blood cell counts are low (i.e. platelet count < 50,000 or neutrophil count (AND) < 1000). You will need to do mouth care at least 4 times per day.

The equipment you will need:

1. **Toothette/Soft Toothbrush**
 2. **Baking Soda Mouthwash (See below)**
 3. **Other medication as required**
 4. **Small cups**
- Brush teeth using a toothbrush. Use either baking soda or a baking soda-based toothpaste.
 - Discontinue brushing if gums bleed, but continue with the remaining mouth care activities.
 - **Baking Soda Mouthwash:** Measure 1 teaspoon of baking soda into an 8oz glass of water, or ¼ teaspoon of 2oz of water.
 - Swish well throughout your mouth and spit it out.
 - Good frequent mouth care helps to neutralize and acidic sections and decrease the burning sensation in your mouth.