

Oral Care for Dysphagic Patients



Optimal Speech Pathology 2012
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Why is oral care so important –

1. Relieve dry mouth

- ▶ More than 500 medications which may contribute to dry mouth
 - ▶ ☐ antidepressants (SSRI's, TCA's)
 - ▶ ☐ antipsychotics (haloperidol, olanzapine)
 - ▶ ☐ diuretics (frusemide, spiro lactone)
 - ▶ ☐ antihypertensives (ACE inhibitors)
 - ▶ ☐ sedatives (alprazolam, diazepam, temazepam)
 - ▶ ☐ analgesics (opioids, NSAIDs)
 - ▶ ☐ antihistamines (sedating and non-sedating)
 - ▶ ☐ anticonvulsants (tegretol, neurontin)
 - ▶ ☐ miscellaneous (levodopa, nicotine)
 - ▶ Anticholinergics (atropine, oxybutynin)

But not just a comfort measure..

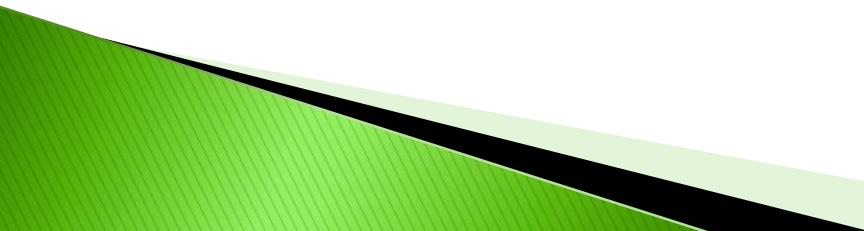
Dry Mouth is not just uncomfortable

Complications include :

- ▶ dental caries,
- ▶ oral infection,
- ▶ candidiasis,
- ▶ difficulties with use of dentures


2. Infection

Offenbacher et al 1996 suggested that having infected gums is equivalent to an open sore the size of your forearm in terms of **infection risk**

- ▶ **Increased risk of aspiration pneumonia**
Presence of oral disease can increase risk from 3 to 6 times (gram -ve bacteria)
 - ▶ Risk increases with : poor health, swallowing problems, poor brushing, dependence for feeding, dry mouth, antibiotics
- 

3. Added benefits

Help prevent :

- ▶ bad breath,
 - ▶ bleeding and infected gums,
 - ▶ painful tooth decay,
 - ▶ abscesses and life threatening infections,
 - ▶ tooth loss
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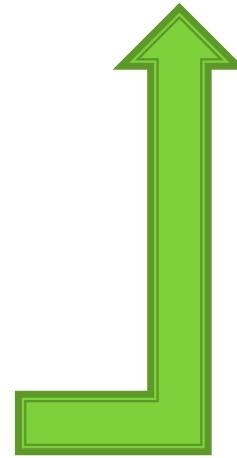
4. Cough Sensitivity

- ▶ Studies currently in Japan and NZ acute hospitals relating regular oral care to strength of cough reflex – the stronger the cough, the more effective the airway protection...



So we know we need to do good oral care – but how?

- ▶ 1. Inspection
- ▶ 2. Equipment
- ▶ 3. Procedure
- ▶ 4. Documentation



Inspect – lips

- ▶ Should be pink and smooth– not dry, cracked or bleeding



HIV Web Study (www.HIVwebstudy.org)

Supported by HRSA

Inspect – lower lip mucosa

Simple Test:

- ▶ • Pull forward the lower lip and wipe dry
- ▶ with tissue/gauze.
- ▶ • Saliva should start to bead within 1
- ▶ minute.

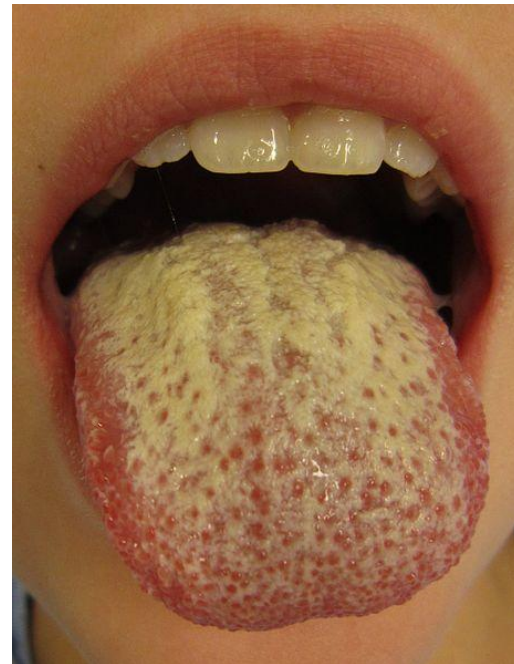


Inspect – tongue and saliva – thin/thick?

Tongue should be pink and moist

- ▶ Not coated, shiny with/without redness, not blistered or cracked or coated

Saliva can be thin/thick or absent



Inspect – gums and teeth

- ▶ Check for firm pink gums – not red, swollen or bleeding
- ▶ Check for signs of plaque or tartar build up




Inspect – breath!

- ▶ Bad breath is a give away sign...



Equipment and Procedure (Westmead Smiles for Life)

Toothbrushing Toolkit (Westmead Smiles for Life)

- ▶ • Toothbrush
 - ▶ • Fluoride toothpaste
 - ▶ • Floss/interdental cleaners
 - ▶ • Lanoline/Vaseline/Amolin for lips
 - ▶ • Torch
 - ▶ • Cheek retractor
 - ▶ • Nailbrush
 - ▶ • Soap
 - ▶ • Flannel
- 

Procedure (Westmead Smiles for life)



- ▶ Positioning/posture
- ▶ • Assess client co-operation
- ▶ • Assess mouth
- ▶ • Plan toothbrushing sequence
- ▶ • 'Lift the Lip' away from the teeth
- ▶ • Lanoline/Vaseline/Amolin for lips
- ▶ Bend or remodel toothbrush
- ▶ • Electric brushes on/off/in the mouth if tolerated
- ▶ • Pea size amount of fluoride toothpaste
- ▶ • Brush gum margins and teeth
- ▶ • Rinse brush regularly if required

Special Equipment – brushes



Special Equipment – brushes



Special Equipment – bite block



Special Equipment – mouthwash



Special Equipment – humidifiers and nebulisers



And lastly...document...

Consider an oral hygiene assessment form to monitor changes in client's mouth

Oral care record – how often, what was needed

Suction record – include how much, character of secretion

Coughing record



Contact us...



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