

Chlorhexidine

Used to treat periodontal disease.

-- Use **3 times daily** for **30 seconds** then spit. **Do not rinse mouth out immediately after use.**

-- Use this during the **high-risk period (5-14 days)** into cycle) as oral hygiene is likely poor during this time.

-- Positive effects last approximately **4-6 weeks** after a **2-week treatment.**

Do not use alcohol-based Chlorhexidine, as this can irritate the mouth.

Nystatin

Used to treat fungal infections.

-- If **Chlorhexidine** and **Nystatin** are being used together, make sure to administer **1 hour apart.**

Biotene

Used to treat dry mouth.

-- Rinse **2-4 times daily** for **30-60 seconds.** Then **spit.**

Biotene is acidic and may irritate mouth and teeth. It is not typically recommended for routine care.

Magic Mouth Wash

Used for pain and fungal infection.

-- Most formulations are used **every 4-6 hours** and held in the mouth for **1-2 minutes.** **Do not drink or eat within 30 minutes of rinsing.**

Lip Care

-- Apply **water-based** products **twice daily.** **Avoid petroleum-based products** as they may harbor bacteria.

Mucositis, one of the most common side effects of cancer treatment, is the painful inflammation and ulceration of tissues lining the mouth and digestive tract.

-- Follow a Strict Oral Hygiene Routine

-- Take Appropriate OTC Painkillers

Try to take medications around the **same time** as oral hygiene care is performed.

-- Rinse With Baking Soda and Water

Rinse **4-6 times daily**, if needed.

-- Keep Oral Tissues Moist

Suck on **ice chips** and **drink water** regularly. **Saliva substitutes** can be used in cases of severe dry mouth.

-- Avoid Irritating Foods

Dry, salty, spicy, acidic, and hot foods can cause dry mouth and sores.



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What Do I Need to Do Before Receiving Cancer Therapy?

During cancer treatment, **radiation** kills cells from the outside and **chemotherapy** kills cells from the inside, leading to many **serious oral side effects** that include:

- Pain
- Oral Dryness
- Increased risk of infection
- Jaw Muscle Stiffness
- Jaw Muscle Changes
- Tongue Discomfort

Dental Examination:

1 month prior to initiating cancer treatment in order to help manage and prevent treatment side effects.

Extractions:

2 weeks prior to starting treatment to allow time for healing.

Brushing and Mouth Cleaning

Infants

Clean gums and tongue with clean soft cloth **2-3 times daily**.

Children

- Use a soft bristle toothbrush **2-3 times daily for 2 minutes**.
- Use **pea-size** amount of toothpaste.
- Replace brush every **2-3 months**.

Do not brush after vomiting. Wait 1 hour. Rinse mouth thoroughly with water to neutralize acids.

How Do I Maintain Oral Hygiene?

Toothpaste

Fluoride is key to cavity prevention by strengthening tooth enamel during this vulnerable time of reduced saliva flow.

- Use **ADA**-approved fluoride toothpaste only, preferably with **mild flavors**.
- Fluoride **supplements** may be recommended by your dentist.

No whitening or tartar-control toothpaste. (No Crest Pro-Health)

Tissue Sensitivity Management:

- Consider switching to **non-fluoridated** for a short period of time until pain is manageable.
- Continue regular brushing, as tolerated. May need to switch to **toothette** if a soft brush is too uncomfortable.

Tooth Sensitivity Management:

- Use desensitizing toothpaste (**Sensodyne**) or pastes without SLS.

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Flossing

Technique is key to reducing tissue trauma, which can cause infection.

Though essential to oral hygiene, flossing can irritate sensitive gums and cause bleeding in patients with reduced platelet counts.

- Only use **waxed** floss.
- If tissue trauma occurs due to poor technique, **suspend** flossing.
- **Resume** routine flossing after irritation resolves.

Absolutely no water picks or toothpicks.

What Other Modifications Can I Make?

Diet

Limiting sugar and carbohydrate intake is essential in preventing cavities. Bacteria that cause tooth decay feed on these tasty snacks.



- Limit **sticky foods and sweets** that adhere to teeth and cause cavities.



- Limit to no more than **4-6 ounces** of fruit juice per day.

Do not put in sippy cups between meals or before bedtime.



- Make sure to **rinse after taking medicine by mouth**. Most oral medications contain lots of sugar!

The **frequency** of exposure is more important than the total sugar intake. **In other words, snacking throughout the day will constantly feed bacteria!**

Removable Appliances

Removable appliances and orthodontic retainers should be cleaned regularly after every meal and before bed.

Orthodontic Evaluation

Radiation exposure to the head and neck region during development often results in **functional and cosmetic dental complications later in life.**

In the case of missing teeth, an orthodontic evaluation is recommended by **age 7**.