Mouth Care

What you need to know and why:
Mucositis is inflammation mainly involving the lining in the mouth and throat. Some chemotherapy drugs and/or radiation treatment directed to the neck area can irritate this lining and possibly cause sores. These problems are not pleasant but they are fairly common and may begin 5 to 7 days after your treatment and usually last only a few days.

What you need to watch for (Examine your mouth daily):

- Redness, tender areas, dry mouth, open sores or white patches that do not rub away

What to do:
If you develop mouth sores, white painful patches inside mouth or difficulty swallowing:

- Call - Oncology Clinic - Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.: 905-682-6451

General Oral Care

- Begin mouth care with the start of your chemotherapy treatment
- The recommended rinsing solution is a bland rinse (1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon baking soda in 1 liter/4 cups of water). Rinse and spit several times daily
- Keep at room temperature and use every four hours and discard and remix each day
- Rinse several times daily.
- Commercial mouthwashes with an alcoholic base are not recommended
- For dry mouth moisturize the mouth with water or artificial saliva products (Moi-Stir Spray, Biotene products). Avoid glycerin or lemon-glycerin swabs as they dry the mouth.
- Use prescribed mouthwashes as ordered by your oncologist
- Ice chips, sugar free popsicles and sugar free gum may help dry mouth symptoms
- Eliminating tobacco and alcohol will lessen any unpleasant oral symptoms and aid healing

Lip Care

- To keep lips moist and to avoid chapping and cracking use water soluble lubricants, lanolin (wax-based), or oil based (mineral oil, coco butter) lubricants.
- Water soluble lubricants should be used inside and outside the mouth, they will not interfere with oxygen tubing if you need it, e.g., products compounded with Glaxal base or Derma base (K-Y Jelly, Dermabase)
- Apply lubricant after each cleaning, at bedtime, and as needed
- Water-based lubricants need to be applied more frequently.
- Avoid oil based lubricants on the inside of the mouth.
- Petroleum based products (Vaseline) should be avoided.
- Avoid touching lip sores with your fingers
Dental care
- Brush your teeth with a soft bristle toothbrush within 30 minutes after eating and at bedtime. Brush tongue gently from back to front. The risk of infection increases when plaque is not removed daily.
- Brush and rinse your dentures after eating, remove at bedtime and soak in a fresh solution. Have poorly fitting dentures adjusted.
- Rinse toothbrush after use in hot water and allow to air dry
- Use fluoride toothpaste
- Remove dentures, plates and prostheses before brushing
- Remove dentures from mouth for at least 8 hours per day and store in rinsing solution
- Ask your dentist or hygienist about home fluoride products to prevent tooth decay
- If vomiting occurs, rinse with the bland solution above. Do not brush teeth right after.
- Routine dental work is not recommended during chemotherapy treatment. If dental treatment is needed consult with your oncology team.
- Always inform your dentist or hygienist about your chemotherapy treatment
- If time allows see your dentist or hygienist before starting chemotherapy and then 4-6 weeks following completion to help optimize your oral health.

Nutritional care
- Drink 6-8 glasses (1.5-2 litres) of fluid daily.
- Eat lukewarm non-spicy, non-acid foods which are easy to chew.
- Avoid citrus foods and juices such as oranges and grapefruit.
- Use a straw for liquids to avoid too much contact with your mouth.
- If a sore mouth is making it difficult to eat or drink try soft, bland foods such as creamed soups, mashed potatoes, yogurt, eggs, custard, pudding, cooked cereal, ice cream, casseroles, milk shakes and commercial nutrition supplements.
- Rinse frequently with water, decrease daily sugar intake and use commercial products formulated to treat dry mouth symptoms

More tips for dry mouth:
- Moisten food by adding sauces, gravy, butter, dressings, broth or another liquid.
- Avoid food and drink that irritate the mouth, highly acidic foods and fluids, foods high in sugar, caffeine and alcohol.
- The use of milk, Jell-O, sherbet, applesauce and ice cream is also suggested

Personal Notes/Reminders: