



Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

CLINICAL

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

SUBJECT: ORAL HYGIENE, CARE OF PATIENT

Policy No.: C126.10

Effective Date: 05/1999

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PURPOSE: To assess the oral mucosa, teeth, and lips, detect and prevent infections or damage, and to maintain healthy oral tissue.

PERFORMED BY: RN, LVN, NA, SNW, RA, Interdisciplinary Team Members, and affiliating students under the appropriate department supervision

POLICY STATEMENTS:

- A. The oral cavity is initially assessed by the RN and then reassessed every 8 hours and prn.
Key Point: Oral cavity reassessments are completed every 2 hours in the ICU.
- B. Oral care should be completed twice daily and prn.
Key Point: Oral care is provided every 4 hours in the ICU.
- C. Observe eating/drinking/oral care recommendations posted at the bedside

EQUIPMENT:

- A. Equipment for patients who can safely "swish and spit"
 - Toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash, lip balm or mouth moisturizer
- B. Equipment for patients unable to safely "swish and spit"
 - Gloves, suction toothbrush or toothettes, toothpaste, mouthwash, tongue depressor or bite block, if needed, mouth moisturizer or lip balm, suction set-up with Yankauer, suction catheter and emesis basin or cup.

Key Note: Yankauer suction catheters are replaced every 24 hours
Key Note: For ventilator patients, use CHG Chlorhexidine daily.
- C. Equipment for denture care
 - Denture cup labeled with patient name and MRUN#, denture adhesive cream, toothpaste or cleaner

Key Point: Adhesive cream and cleaner must be provided by patient's family/care provider

PROCEDURAL STEPS:

- A. INDEPENDENT PATIENTS

Instruct patients to:

Perform oral care twice daily and prn, including brush teeth, gums, hard palate, and tongue gently with toothbrush. Swish and spit the mouthwash and apply lip balm to lips and mouth moisturizer to tongue, gums, and hard palate prn.

- B. DEPENDENT PATIENTS

1. If medically cleared, elevate the head of the bed to a minimum of 45 degrees and position patient's head to the side.
2. Provide suction as needed.

3. Brush teeth and gums with toothbrush
4. Gently brush the surface of the tongue and hard palate.
Key Point: If patient is unable to tolerate the use of a toothbrush, swabs/toothettes may be used.
5. Toothettes can be used to apply the mouth moisturizer to the lips, tongue, gums, and hard palate.

C. CARE OF MOUTH WITH SIGNIFICANT DEBRIS

1. When routine mouth care is insufficient in removing all debris, use suction toothbrush or oral swabs/toothettes soaked in 1.5% hydrogen peroxide
Key Point: Do NOT use standard hydrogen peroxide without diluting
Key Point: Do NOT use hydrogen peroxide on neutropenic patients, fresh granulating surfaces, or exposed bone.
2. It may be necessary to manually remove thick, dried, and tenacious secretions using gauze.

D. DENTURE / APPLIANCE CARE

1. Encourage patient to complete independently or assist patient if unable.
2. Complete denture/ appliance care daily and PRN
3. Brush dentures/ appliance with toothbrush and toothpaste, gums to crowns. Rinse under running water.
4. Rinse denture cup and fill with cool water. Place denture/appliance in cup and store at bedside.

E. EDUCATION

1. Educate patient / care providers regarding the importance oral care and to wash their hands before and after performing oral care.
2. Provide dependent patients oral care training.

F. DOCUMENTATION

1. Document assessment, oral care and any abnormal findings in the EHR.

REVIEWED BY: Dulce Dones, MSN, RN

REFERENCES:

Nettina, S. M. (2020). *Lippincott manual of nursing practice*. (10th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins

Oral Care (2020) Lippincott Procedures. Retrieved February 16, 2021 from <https://procedures.lww.com/lnp/view.do?pld=2525760&hits=oral&a=true&ad=false>

05/99 – Revised
08/02 – Reviewed
06/05 – Revised
04/08 – Revised
10/11 – Revised
01/15 – Revised

2/18 - Revised
05/21 - Revised