

## Carers Information Card – How to provide mouth care

**Mucositis** is inflammation of the mouth, tongue or cheek and can be caused by large doses of chemotherapy, poor oral hygiene, poorly fitting dentures or plates, poor nutrition, excessive alcohol and smoking.

### Prevention:

1. Avoid strong, hot or spicy foods.
2. Use lip balm – avoiding any that are alcohol based
3. Avoid smoking, alcohol and remain hydrated.
4. Eat a balanced diet with high protein foods
5. Gently brush the teeth and gums after every meal and before bed.
6. After brushing, use a non-alcohol based mouthwash
7. If possible, gently daily flossing is encouraged
8. If there are dentures, clean them twice daily and they can be soaked overnight. Also clean the container regularly



### Pain Management:

1. Pain can be managed through analgesic mouthwashes. Analgesics may also be required orally or by injection.
2. Oral gels can provide rapid and lasting relief.
3. Frequent rinsing (eg 2 hourly) with ice or tap water with some additive (eg sodium bicarbonate or lemon juice).
4. Frequently moisten the mouth with sips of fluids (if possible) and plain water sprays or atomisers. Mouth swabs by you and your carer can also help.
5. Increase saliva flow by using sugar-free pineapple pieces, frozen lemon slices, frozen tonic water or chewing gum.

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**Purpose:** To provide information that reinforces the education provided by nursing or support staff to assist patients and carers in the prevention and management of Mucositis.

**Please note:**

1. If you have any difficulty assisting with this or have any concerns, please let nursing or support staff know.
2. If on chemotherapy, don't use ice for rinsing.
3. Ask your nurse or support staff to suggest different non-alcohol mouth washes and oral gels.

**Please contact:** The Community Palliative Care Service if you have any concerns.

**Further information:**

The Joanna Briggs Institute Consumer Information Program provides up to date literature reviews to ensure your information is based on the best available evidence. [www.joannabriggs.edu.au/](http://www.joannabriggs.edu.au/)

**Acknowledgements:** Author: Ruth Young 'Mouth Care for Palliative Care'  
Joanna Briggs Institute

**Disclaimer:** The Community Palliative Service and all persons involved in producing this information sheet will not be held responsible for any adverse event or loss from the implementation of all or part of this information. All reasonable efforts have been taken to ensure that the item this information sheet pertains to is maintained to industry specific safety standards.

**Please return this card to the Community Palliative Care Service when no longer required.**