

How to Care for Yourself Before Head and Neck Radiation Begins



EATING AND DRINKING	<p><i>Your Dietitian will help you with your eating and drinking before treatment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eat a balanced diet with foods from all food groups as indicated by your Dietician• Choose soft or blended foods if you are having pain or trouble chewing or swallowing regular foods• Aim to drink 8 cups of water every day (avoid alcohol and caffeine)• Try to maintain your current body weight• If you are underweight, speak to your dietitian
SWALLOWING	<p><i>Your Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) may help you with your swallowing before treatment</i></p> <p><i>Swallowing Study and Diet Changes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before treatment begins, you may be assessed by a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) to get a better idea of how you are swallowing• To keep you swallowing safely during treatment, some of your food and liquid may be changed <p><i>Swallowing Exercises</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start your exercises right away• Do each exercise 5-10 times, 3 times a day or as advised by your SLT <p><i>How Do I Know if I Have Swallowing Problems?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coughing, throat clearing or wet/gurgly voice during meals• Food feeling stuck in your throat, and/or using liquids to help wash food down• More effort to swallow, and/or needing more time to eat• Trouble chewing food• Liquid coming out of your mouth or nose <p><i>Swallowing Safety</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sit up straight when eating or drinking and remain sitting up for 30 minutes afterwards• Use teaspoons and take small sips of liquids• Alternate between small bites of food with small sips of liquid• Try not to talk while chewing or swallowing• Check that your mouth and cheeks are free from food after eating• To help you swallow as best you can, you may be given other swallowing techniques
ORAL CARE	<p><i>Votre équipe dentaire en oncologie vous aidera pour vos soins de la bouche avant le début de votre traitement</i></p> <p><i>Flossing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Floss at least once daily with waxed floss <p><i>Brushing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a soft toothbrush<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Gently brush after meals and before bed◦ Gently brush tongue <p><i>Rinsing (see “Mouth Rinse Recipe” on back)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rinse, swish and spit rinse several times after brushing or flossing<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Ensure prescribed rinses are done 20 minutes apart <p><i>Oral Moisturizing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moisturising using steaming or a nebuliser if you have been given one as part of your care• Moisturize often with mouth rinse and water based lubricants<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Avoid vaseline jelly and glycerin products <p><i>Lip Care</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use water soluble lubricants• Apply after cleaning, at bedtime and as needed• Do not apply vaseline Jelly
SKIN CARE	<p><i>Your Dental Oncology team will help you with your mouth care before your treatment begins</i></p> <p><i>Washing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wash with mild unperfumed soap• Bathe using warm water, rinse well and pat dry with a clean soft towel• Wear loose fitting and breathable clothing such as cotton <p><i>Moisturize your skin</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use water based body lotions or creams to moisturize the skin as needed• Do not use aftershave or perfume products on your skin• Avoid products that contain vaseline Jelly <p><i>Protect your skin</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect your skin from direct sunlight and wind• Wear a brimmed hat and protective clothing• Avoid extreme hot or cold temperatures• Do not use ice packs, heating pads or soak in a hot tub• Continue shaving, but stop if your skin becomes irritated
TUBE FEEDING AND CARE	<p><i>If you have a feeding tube, your Dietitian and healthcare team will work with you to manage your tube feeding and care</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flush your tube with 60mL (1 syringe) of boiled and cooled water 2 times a day (morning and night)• Clean the skin around your tube daily and keep it dry<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Clean the skin with a cotton swab or gauze dipped in water or gentle soap and water2. Wipe away any crusting or drainage3. Gently pat dry with a soft, clean towel or cotton ball4. If there is a leak, cover skin with a gauze bandage• Cover tube by taping plastic while showering; no baths, hot tubs or pools to make sure it stays dry• Do not use rubbing alcohol, peroxide or antibacterial lotions/gels on the skin around your tube

Oral Care

MOUTH RINSE BLAND RECIPE



1 level teaspoon
(5 ml) of salt



1 level teaspoon
(5 ml) of baking soda



4 cups (1 L)
of water

HOW TO MAKE YOUR MOUTH RINSE

- 1 level teaspoon (5 ml) of salt
- Put the mouthwash in a container with a lid
- The mouthwash should be kept at room temperature
- Discard any remaining mouth rinse at the end of each day and make a new batch

HOW TO USE YOUR MOUTH RINSE

- Shake well before using
- Rinse and gargle with one tablespoon (15 ml) and then spit out
- Repeat 2 or 3 times at each use
- Use mouthwash every 2 hours during the day

DENTURE CARE

- Keep your dentures out as much as possible if they are causing pain
- Remove dentures, plates and prostheses before brushing
- Gently brush and rinse dentures after meals and before bed. Avoid vigorous scrubbing
- Soak dentures in cleansing solution for at least 8 hours
- If you are on antifungal therapy, soak your denture in anti-fungal solution

DIRECTIONS FOR USE OF FLUORIDE TRAYS

- Brush and floss before wearing trays.
- Fill the grooves of the trays 1/3 full with gel
- Insert tray and spit out any excess gel
- Leave the tray in for 5 minutes
 - Use at bedtime for longer lasting results
 - Brush trays and air dry after each use
 - Do not** use hot water to clean trays (hot water will distort the tray)
 - Do not** eat, drink or rinse for 30 minutes after tray use

Inform your Dental team if you are no longer able to use your fluoride trays.

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT YOUR CARE:
