

How to Care for Yourself **Before** Head and Neck Radiation Begins



<h2>EATING AND DRINKING</h2>	<p><i>Your Registered Dietitian (RD) 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 in Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating. • Choose soft or blended foods if you are having pain or trouble chewing or swallowing regular foods. • Aim to drink 8 cups of non carbonated fluid every day (alcohol free). • Keep your body weight the same. • If you are underweight, try to gain some weight.
<h2>SWALLOWING</h2>	<p><i>Your Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) may help you with your swallowing before treatment.</i></p> <p>Swallowing Study and Diet Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before treatment begins, you may be assessed by a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) 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>Swallowing Exercises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start your exercises right away. • Do each exercise 5 to 10 times, 3 times a day. <p>Signs of Swallowing Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coughing, throat-clearing, or a wet or gurgly during meals • Food feeling stuck in your throat, or a need to wash food down with fluid. • Needing to make an effort to swallow, or needing more time to eat. • Trouble chewing food. • Liquid coming out of your mouth or nose. <p>Swallowing Safety</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 liquids. • Try not to talk while chewing or swallowing. • Check that your mouth and cheeks are free from food after eating. • You may be given other swallowing techniques to help you swallow as best you can.
<h2>ORAL CARE</h2>	<p><i>Your Dental Oncology team will help you with your mouth care before your treatment begins.</i></p> <p>Flossing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floss at least once daily with waxed floss. <p>Brushing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a soft toothbrush. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Brush before bed. ◦ Gently brush tongue. ◦ Brush within 30 minutes of eating. <p>Rinsing (See “Mouth Rinse Bland Recipe”)</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 medicated rinses are done 20 minutes apart. <p>Oral Moisturizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moisturize nasal passages through the night with a steam vapourizer in your room. • Moisturize with mouth rinse and water based lubricants often. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Avoid petroleum jelly and glycerin products. <p>Lip Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use water-soluble, wax-based, or oil-based lubricants. • Apply after cleaning, at bedtime and as needed. • Do not apply petroleum Jelly.
<h2>SKIN CARE</h2>	<p><i>Helpful Skin-care Guidelines from Your Radiation Treatment team.</i></p> <p>Moisturize your skin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash with mild unscented soap. • Bath with warm water, rinse well, and pat dry with a clean soft towel. • Wear loose-fitting and breathable clothing, such as cotton. <p>Moisturize your skin</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 petroleum Jelly. <p>Protect your skin</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 or heating pads, and do not soak in a hot tub. • Use an electric shaver only.
<h2>TUBE FEEDING AND CARE</h2>	<p><i>If you have a feeding tube, your Registered Dietitian (RD) 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 lukewarm tap 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 dipped in water or gentle soap and water. 2. Wipe away any crusting or drainage. 3. Gently pat dry with a soft, clean towel or cotton ball. 4. If there is a leak, cover skin with a gauze bandage. • Cover tube while showering; no baths, hot tubs or pools. • Do not use rubbing alcohol, peroxide, antibacterial lotions or 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

- Mix 1 teaspoon of baking soda and 1 teaspoon of salt with 4 cups of water.
- Put the mouthwash in a container with a lid.
- The mouthwash should be kept at room temperature.
- Discard 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.
- Remove dentures, plates and prostheses before brushing.
- Brush and rinse dentures after meals and before bed.
- Soak dentures in cleansing solution for at least 8 hours.
- If you are on antifungal therapy, soak 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:
