
Mouth Care After Head and Neck Surgery



Head and Neck Unit
St. Joseph's Hospital
905-522-1155 ext. 3504

Looking after your mouth:

After head and neck surgery, you need to make sure you look after your mouth well to:

- prevent infection and ulcers
- prevent build up of debris and feel better

Check your mouth:

Each day check your mouth using a flashlight. Check for signs of ulcers starting, infection and debris. Signs of ulcers are redness, swelling, pain, bleeding. Signs of infection are redness, swelling, pain and an increase in temperature.

Mouthwash:

Be careful using mouthwashes. Use only mouthwashes recommended by the Head and Neck Unit:

- Head and Neck solution which is equal parts of 3% Hydrogen Peroxide and Hygeol 1:20 solution. Keep this in a closed dark container away from light. Use this mouthwash until it is finished.
- You may use a salt and water solution for rinsing your mouth after using mouthwash. Mix 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of salt to 4 cups (1 litre) of water in a container.
- Be careful of the mouthwashes you buy. Some contain alcohol which dries out the mucous membranes. Check with your nurse, pharmacist or doctor before buying any mouthwash.

Using a cup or glass:

1. Put about 4 ounces (120 ml) of mouthwash in a cup or glass.
2. Wash your mouth and gargle with the mouthwash.
3. Fill the cup or glass with the salt and water solution.
4. Rinse your mouth well.
5. Do this _____ times a day.