



York Teaching Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Preventing and Managing Oral Mucositis

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Oncology and Haematology

① For more information contact:

24 hour
Oncology and Haematology Triage

Telephone: 01904 726516

Caring with pride

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Introduction

Oral mucositis is the inflammation of the mouth. It can occur as a side effect of chemotherapy. Symptoms include:

- Sore and swollen mouth.
- Mouth ulcers of any size.
- Dry mouth and lips.
- Difficulties swallowing and talking.
- Presence of Thrush (white spots or patches) in the mouth.

If it is difficult to swallow, or white patches appear in your mouth please call Triage on 01904 726516, for assistance.

Good oral hygiene

Good oral hygiene helps to decrease oral bacteria and helps prevent oral infections. Tips include:

- Use a soft toothbrush and non-alcoholic mouthwash after each meal to clean teeth or dentures.
- Ensure your mouth is clear of food after each meal by using a salt water rinse.
- Drink plenty of non-caffeinated and non-alcoholic beverages to keep your mouth moist.
- Check your mouth daily for symptoms of oral mucositis.
- Reduce your intake of alcohol and stop smoking.
- Delay any dental work during treatment. If needed, please speak with your oncology consultant.

Iced drinks

Iced drinks or iced confectionary can help to prevent oral mucositis, by shrinking the blood vessels in your mouth. This works by decreasing blood flow and the amount of chemotherapy that reaches cells in the mouth.

- Swill, gargle and drink a cold drink for five minutes before treatment.
- Swill, gargle and drink a cold drink 20-30 minutes during and 90 minutes after treatment.
- Try ice, ice lollies or other cold treats.

Do not take any of these measures if oral mucositis has already developed.

Warning: The chemotherapy treatment, Oxaliplatin, can cause difficulty breathing when exposed to the cold. Please speak to your chemotherapy nurse before using iced drinks to ensure you are safe.

Benzydamine mouthwash

Benzydamine is a strong, fast acting, anti-inflammatory mouthwash. It is used when oral mucositis has already developed, as it helps reduce pain and redness in the mouth. Remember to:

- Contact Triage on 01904 726516, if you believe you need mouthwash.
- Always follow the prescription label and use Benzydamine as instructed.
- Avoid Chlorhexidine Mouthwash. As it is not recommended for the treatment of oral mucositis.

Remember: always discuss any new treatments with your chemotherapy nurses and your oncology consultant.

These methods are based on up-to-date evidence. For more information on relevant guidelines, please visit: <http://ukomic.co.uk> or alternatively contact Triage on 01904 726516.

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Ward sister, Ward 31, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 726031.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

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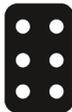
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email: access@york.nhs.uk



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