**Aim:** To provide guidance on oral care for patients in Critical Care  

**Scope:** All adult patients in Critical Care

### ASSESS ORAL HYGIENE
- Using appropriate assessment tool  
- Within 8 hours of admission  
- At least 12 hourly thereafter

### Standard Oral Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Brush teeth/dentures, gums and tongue twice daily with a soft toothbrush and toothpaste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rinse afterwards to prevent drying from excess toothpaste, then suction with a soft tipped catheter</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Apply lip moisturiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Store dentures in water or denture cleaning fluid and change daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional Considerations
- Consider, with medical advice:  
  - artificial saliva for dry mouth  
  - topical analgesia for painful mouth  
  - topical anti-fungal liquid for oral candida  
  - chlorhexidine should only be used if clinically indicated, e.g. after cardiac surgery, and if prescribed

### SEDATED AND VENTILATED PATIENTS
- In addition to standard care, rinse mouth with water on a foam sponge, 2-4hrly and suction with a soft tipped catheter  
- Aspirate subglottic ETT/IT suction port 4 hourly, if present  
- Move position of ETT 2-4 hourly

**PLEASE SEE YOUR UNITS FULL GUIDELINES FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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