



**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

**Seek advice from senior medical team, Dentists, Dental Hygienist or Oral/Maxo-facial surgeons in the case of oral surgery, trauma, post radiotherapy or chemotherapy or allergies to fluoride.**

### Each shift assess and document

- Condition of teeth/dentures
- Condition of gums
- Ulceration
- Oral Candida
- Saliva and halitosis
- Piercings
- Debris
- Device related lip integrity

### Standard Oral Care

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

### 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/TT suction port 4 hourly, if present
- Move position of ETT 2-4 hourly

**Intubation inhibits the production of natural saliva which normally protects the oral cavity.**

Please see your units full guidelines for more information

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