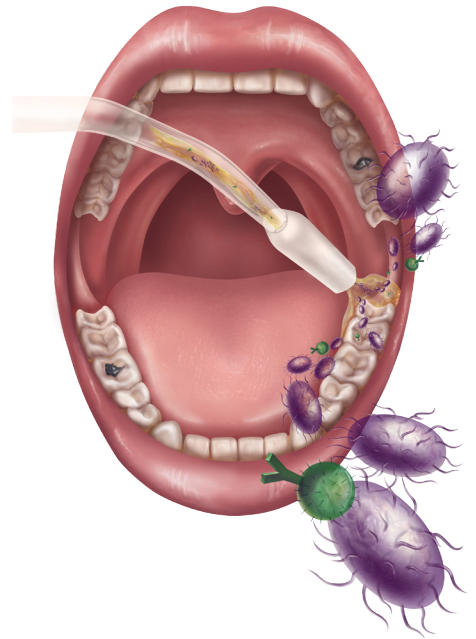


Frequent Oral Care is Important

Policy

1. The oral cavity is assessed initially and daily by the Registered Nurse.
2. Unconscious or intubated patients are provided oral care every 2-4 hours and PRN.
3. Intubated patients will be assessed to determine the need for removal of oropharyngeal secretions every 8 hours as well as prior to repositioning the tube or deflation of the cuff.



Procedure

1. Set up suction equipment.
2. Position patient's head to the side or place in semi-fowlers.
3. Provide suction, as needed, in intubated patients to remove oropharyngeal secretions that can migrate down the tube and settle on top of the cuff.
4. Brush teeth using suction toothbrush and small amounts of water and alcohol free antiseptic oral rinse.
 - 4.1 Brush for approximately one to two minutes.
 - 4.2 Exert gentle pressure while moving in short horizontal or circular strokes.
5. Gently brush the surface of the tongue.
6. Use suction swab to clean the teeth and tongue if brushing causes discomfort or bleeding.
 - 6.1 Place swab perpendicular to gum line, applying gentle mechanical action for one to two minutes.
 - 6.2 Turn swab in clockwise rotation to remove mucous and debris.
7. Apply mouth moisturizer inside mouth.
8. Apply lip balm if needed.

Revisions to Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital Oral Care Policy and Procedure, from "The Effect of a Comprehensive Oral Care Protocol on Patients at Risk for Ventilator-Associated Pneumonia," Journal for Advocate Health Care. 4(1): 27-30, Spring/Summer 2002.