

PROTOCOL FOR: Mucositis: Care of the Patient with Oral Mucositis

SUPPORTIVE DATA: Many oncology patients will develop some degree of mucositis following chemotherapy. Mucositis is defined as oral mucosal inflammation and ulceration resulting from the direct cytotoxic effects of the chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

DESIRED

- PATIENT OUTCOMES:
1. The patient will comply with the prescribed oral hygiene ordered.
 2. The patient maintains maximum level of comfort as evidenced by a pain score less than 5.
 3. The patient will exhibit signs of a healing oral mucosa as white blood cell (WBC) count begins to rise, evidenced by:
 - a. Resolution of ulcerations/lesions
 - b. Decreased inflammation
 - c. Absence of infection
 - d. Resolution of pain
 - e. Normal oral functions

- ASSESSMENTS:
1. Early signs and symptoms of mucositis include:
 - a. Dryness of the mouth
 - b. Oral erythema
 - c. Pseudomembrane formation (whitening of the oral mucosa)
 - d. Swelling of the lips and tongue
 - e. Oral tingling/burning/pain
 - f. Sore throat
 - g. Secondary localized infection (e.g.: candidiasis)
 2. As mucositis progresses, the patient may experience:
 - a. Oral ulcerations/lesions
 - b. Bleeding
 - c. Copious, thick oral secretions
 - d. Increased oral pain
 - e. Burning/pain when swallowing
 - f. Difficulty swallowing
 - g. Secondary localized/systemic infection
 3. Mucous Membranes
 - a. Inspect oral cavity every 12 hours and PRN as clinically indicated.
 4. Patient Comfort
 - a. Encourage patient to rate pain on a 0 - 10 pain scale (0 = no pain; 10 = the worst, most excruciating pain) q 12 hours and PRN.
 - b. Administer topical/systemic analgesics as ordered.
 - c. Assess the effectiveness of analgesics. Encourage patient to rate the pain on a 0 - 10 pain scale after analgesics.

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- d. Consult with the physician, dentists and other relevant health care professionals as needed.
- e. Instruct/assist patient to gently suction oral secretions with Yankaur catheter (change the Yankaur q 24 hours and PRN).
- f. Reassure the patient that as the WBC increases, the mucositis will resolve.

APPROVAL: Nursing Standards Committee

EFFECTIVE DATE: 9/90

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