

Three Good Reasons to See a Dentist

Before Cancer Treatment



About ***Three Good Reasons To See a Dentist Before Cancer Treatment***

Thank you for your interest in *Three Good Reasons To See a Dentist Before Cancer Treatment*. This publication is intended for adults whose reading skills are below the second grade level. It was developed by the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), one of the National Institutes of Health.

This booklet provides important oral health information to patients with cancer through a series of unique illustrations called pictographs—pictures that represent ideas. Research conducted at the Johns Hopkins Oncology Center found that when pictographs were used, patients' abilities to remember how to deal with problems associated with cancer treatment increased significantly. The pictographs consisted of simple sketches with stick figures, allowing actions to be depicted in a clear, culturally neutral manner.

In *Three Good Reasons To See a Dentist Before Cancer Treatment*, pictographs inform people who have been diagnosed with cancer of the oral health complications they may develop because of their treatment. The illustrations depict patients and the cancer care team in numerous situations that highlight why patients need to seek dental care before and during cancer treatment. Further, the pictographs explain steps patients can take during treatment to prevent or minimize oral health problems.

Three Good Reasons To See a Dentist Before Cancer Treatment is most effective when a member of the health care team explains the booklet to the patient. Each pictograph represents actions that need to be reviewed. Introduced in this way, the pictographs serve to remind patients of the instructions when the booklet is reviewed at home.

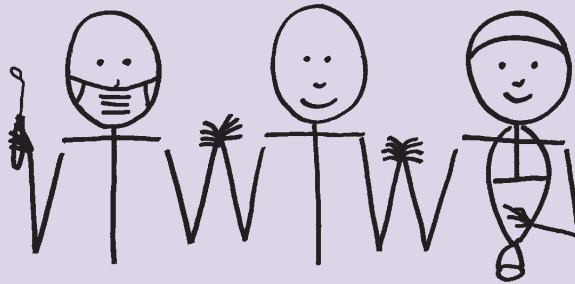
If you have any questions about this booklet or would like to order more copies, contact the National Oral Health Information Clearinghouse, a service of NIDCR.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research
National Oral Health Information Clearinghouse
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Three Good Reasons to See a Dentist Before Cancer Treatment

Fight Cancer

1



Your cancer care team should include a dentist.

Save Your Teeth and Bones

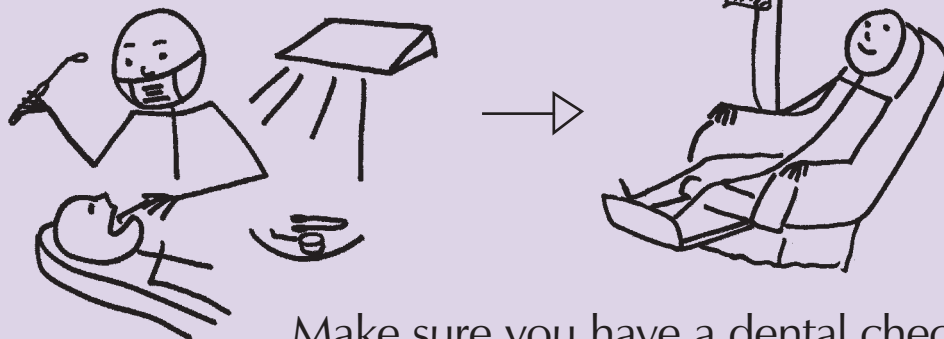
2



Children also need special protection.

Feel Better

3



Make sure you have a dental check up before your first cancer treatment.



Protect Your Mouth During Cancer Treatment



Soak an extra-soft toothbrush in warm water to make it softer.



Brush your teeth and tongue gently.



Brush after every meal.



Brush at bedtime.



Floss once a day.

1



If flossing hurts in one place, keep flossing in the others.



Rinse often with water.



Don't use mouthwash with alcohol in it.



contains alcohol

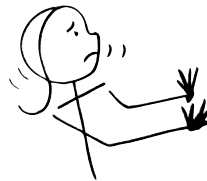
Sip water and use a saliva substitute to keep your mouth moist.



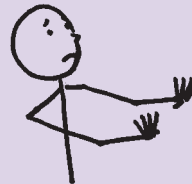
Choose soft, easy-to-chew foods.



Avoid spicy, sour, or crunchy foods.



Avoid very hot or icy-cold food.



Avoid alcohol.



Stop smoking or chewing tobacco.

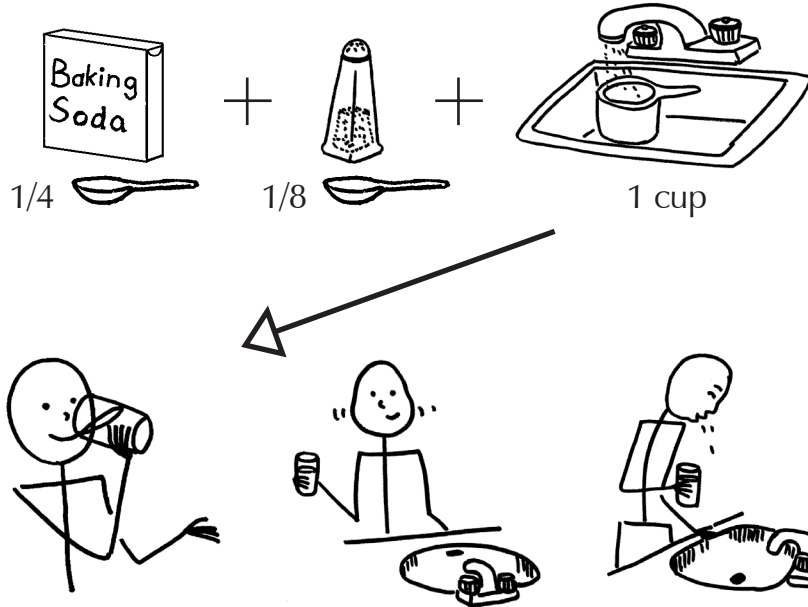


Tips for Mouth Problems

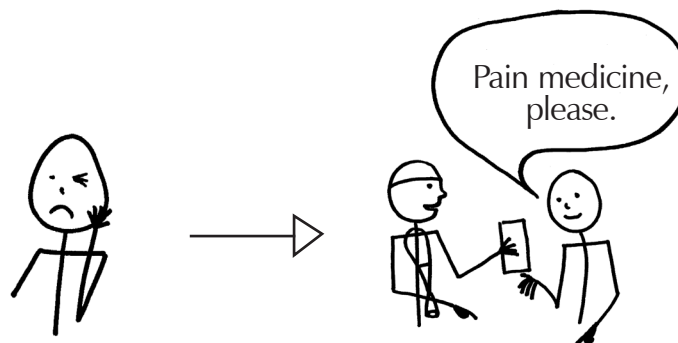
Sore Mouth, Sore Throat



- Rinse often with
 - 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda and
 - 1/8 teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of warm water
 - Don't swallow.



-
- Ask your cancer care team about medicine that can help with the pain.



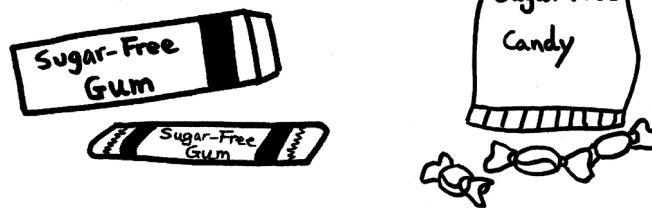
Dry Mouth



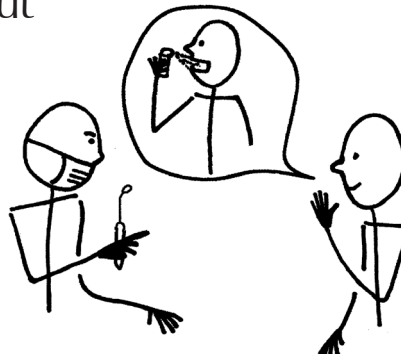
- Sip water often.



- Use sugar-free gum or candy.



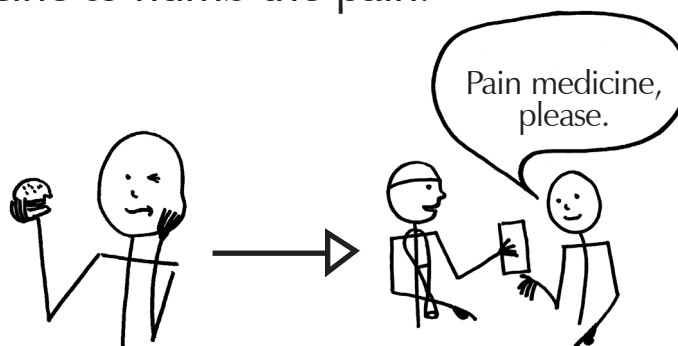
- Talk to your dentist about saliva substitutes.



Eating Problems



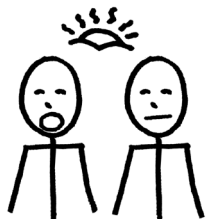
- Ask for medicine to numb the pain.



Stiff Chewing Muscles

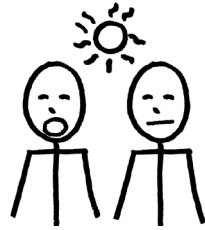


- Three times a day, open and close your mouth as far as you can without pain. Repeat 20 times.



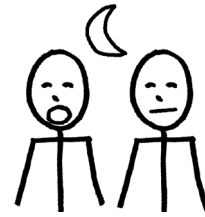
20

morning



20

noon



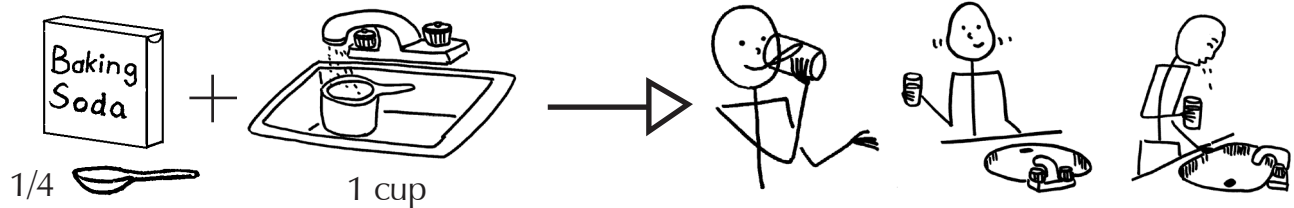
20

night

Vomiting



- Rinse your mouth after vomiting. Use 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda in 1 cup of warm water.
- Don't swallow.



1/4



1 cup

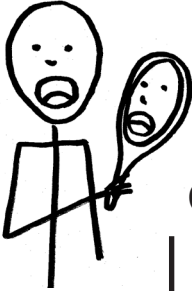
Cavities



- Ask your dentist to put fluoride on your teeth to help prevent cavities.



When to Call Your Cancer Care Team



Check your mouth every day.



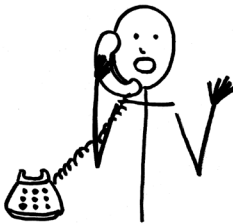
Sores



Swelling



Bleeding



Pain



Sticky white film



Acknowledgements

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**Oral Health, Cancer Care, and You
Fitting the Pieces Together**