

A clean mouth provides several benefits; helping to prevent sores and possibly improving appetite. It also can help with the uncomfortable condition of dry mouth, which can be caused by mouth breathing, oxygen therapy, infrequent mouth care, a side effect of medications or a complication of radiation therapy.

If your loved one is able to do mouth care, assist him or her to do so.

WHAT TO DO:

- Raise the head of the bed and place a clean cloth under the chin.
- Remove any dentures and place them in a container of water.
- Sip water to moisten mouth.
- Apply toothpaste to the brush and gently brush teeth, gums and tongue.
- Allow to sip water and spit alternately.
- Finish with cool water and/or alcohol-free mouthwash as desired.
- If dentures were removed, brush them with toothpaste or clean them with denture cleanser before replacing them in a clean mouth.
- Leave poor-fitting dentures out of the mouth to prevent mouth sores.
- Pat lips with a clean cloth and apply non-petroleum lip balm to prevent dryness. Reapply lip balm frequently during the day.

Toothettes may be easier to use than a toothbrush. They may be obtained from the Big Bend Hospice team. Follow the same instructions as for a toothbrush.

Ask for special instructions for mouth care if your loved one is unconscious or unable to swallow or sit up.

CALL BIG BEND HOSPICE IF:

- Your loved one develops a sore throat or mouth sores.
- White patches are noted on the tongue, gum line or roof of mouth.

Remember, Big Bend Hospice is here to support you. Call your Big Bend Hospice team if you have any questions or concerns at (850) 878-5310.