

Palliative Pain & Symptom Management Consultation

Program: A program to assist service providers in Northeastern Ontario: LHIN 13

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Program administered by VON Algoma
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HEALTH STARTS AT HOME



Keeping Up

Northeastern Ontario Palliative Pain & Symptom Management Consultation Services

Member of the Palliative Care Consultation Network

Brush up on Mouth Care

Good mouth care is a very basic skill which provides much comfort and well-being for your client but this is often overlooked. A dry, painful mouth will limit oral intake and the person will not want to talk as much. Good basic care will help to avoid infections and prevent sores. Some helpful reminders:

- Avoid lemon glycerin swabs and alcohol-containing commercial mouthwashes since these are both drying
- Can use a baking soda mouthwash of 1 teaspoon baking soda and 2 cups water. Club soda also can be used. The person can swish and spit if conscious and if unconscious wipe the mouth with gauze dipped in a rinsing solution or with a toothette.
- Oral balance gel can be used for a very dry mouth-It lasts longer than a moisture spray.
- Use an ultra soft toothbrush. Gently brush the teeth, tongue, and inside of cheeks. Remember to floss if teeth are present and denture care is also very important.

- Sucking sugar free candies can help with a dry mouth but remember that sugar free candies containing sorbitol may lead to diarrhea if taken in large quantities.
- Use a water-soluble lubricant on the lips. Oil-based products may make open sores more inflamed.

There are other suggestions for moisturizing, for mouth pain and mouth conditions that the consultants would be willing to offer to you. Please contact them for assistance.

Tip of the month:

Don't leave a toothette soaking in water for an extended period of time and then put in a client's mouth. From one of the consultants own experience, the foam can separate from the stick and be loose in the person's mouth. Try getting that out of a semi-responsive person's mouth who bites when you put a finger in the mouth!

Meet Your Consultant: Lisa Rowlinson

Lisa Rowlinson has been a registered nurse since 1994 and had an early work history of caring for refugees coming into Canada during the Bosnian War, in both Sault St. Marie and at Base Borden. Other experience includes nursing in Long term care, nursing in the judicial system, and as a manager for a community agency. Throughout these experiences, her passion for nursing has remained kindled in Hospice Palliative Care. In addition to being a palliative pain and symptom management consultant for the

Algoma region, she also is a lead facilitator for the Hospice Palliative Care courses administered in the Algoma region. Lisa's work in hospice Palliative care is further complimented through her role as residential care coordinator for the Algoma Residential Community Hospice.

In 2010, Lisa was successful in obtaining her CHPCN certification and is currently enrolled at Athabasca University pursuing her BScN and RN extended class .