

# Improve the completeness rate of oral care performed by nurses in intensive care units for cancer patients

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## Objective This project aims

This article aims to describe and enhance the completeness of oral care provided by ICU nurses for cancer patients, emphasizing its importance during cancer treatment. It addresses common complications such as mucosal ulcers, dry mouth, and oral infections, with the goal of reducing infection risk, alleviating discomfort, and improving overall quality of life. The study offers practical insights to promote the integration of oral care in critical care, ultimately advancing overall patient health.

## Results

Daily assessments enabled early detection of mucosal changes and effective management of oral issues. Regular cleaning with mouthwashes and moisturizers significantly reduced dry mouth and improved oral odor, while analgesics controlled pain from mucositis. Patients reported fresher oral sensations, diminished pain, and overall satisfaction with the care duration, leading to enhanced comfort and a reduced risk of infection.

## Methods The project addressed

Data were gathered through observations, physical assessments, nurse interviews, and chart reviews. Oral care was tailored to cancer patients' needs, with daily assessments to detect mucositis early. Nurses administered alcohol-free chlorhexidine and herbal mouthwashes regularly to reduce infection risk during 10–15 minute care sessions. Moisturizers and soothing essential oils (e.g., lavender) with massage alleviated dry mouth and promoted relaxation. For severe mucositis, local anesthetics or systemic analgesics were used, supplemented by aromatherapy with peppermint and neroli oils. Interdisciplinary collaboration with dental, oncology, and ICU staff ensured regular evaluation of the care plan.

## Conclusions

Enhanced oral care is vital for managing cancer patients in the ICU. A comprehensive approach—including daily assessments, regular cleaning, targeted therapies, and appropriate care duration—significantly improves patient comfort, reduces infection risks, and elevates overall quality of life and health outcomes.

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