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FLUORIDE CARRIERS, RADIATION THERAPY AND YOUR MOUTH

Radiation therapy given to the head and neck area results in permanent changes in your saliva. These changes will cause your teeth to first become very sensitive and then to decay rapidly unless properly protected by the continued indefinite daily use of fluoride. In addition, frequent rinsing, ideally with a dilute solution (1 teaspoon baking soda in one quart of water), is necessary to reduce soreness of the oral tissues and to prevent infection.

Radiation therapy also has an effect on that portion of the jawbone that receives radiation. This effect permanently reduces the bone's ability to heal and resist infection. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you do not have any elective dental surgery, including gum surgery or extraction of teeth from bone previously treated with radiation.

Recommended Daily Oral Care:

1. Thorough cleaning of the mouth after each meal.
 - A. Thoroughly brush with a non-irritating dentifrice of your choice.
 - B. Floss teeth carefully. Avoid irritation of your gums.
 - C. If you have prosthesis, remove it and clean it with a mild liquid soap and water.
2. Fluoride Application.
 - A. Apply fluoride in prescribed manner wither using a second toothbrush or (in special cases) applying a thin coating of the fluoride gel to the inner surfaces of your fluoride carriers, placing these on the teeth and wearing for 10 minutes.
 - B. If you have been instructed to use the specially made fluoride carriers following the ten-minute wearing period, they should be removed before bed, rinsed in cool water to remove residue fluoride gel, and stored in a cool place until the next morning.
 - C. After removal of the fluoride carriers or after brushing on your fluoride, do not rinse, eat or drink for 30 minutes.

Additional Supplies:

- A. Additional fluoride can be obtained in conjunction with your return visits. This product is called **Previ-Dent**™ (1.1% Sodium Fluoride) is available from your local pharmacy by prescription from your dentist or physician.

Physical Therapy:

If you are instructed to do jaw exercises, or if a Thera-bite has been prescribed for you, it is important that comply with your instructions in order to maintain satisfactory jaw movements.

Dental Care:

- A. You must keep your mouth clean.
- B. You must use the fluoride daily for the rest of your lifetime.
- C. You must be examined and treated by your dentist on a regular schedule of at least once every six months.
- D. You must have your teeth cleaned by a dental hygienist at least once every 6 months.
- E. There are no contraindications to dental x-rays, anesthesia, having your teeth filled or crowned, or root canal treatment.
- F. You must NOT have teeth extracted or undergo gum surgery within the areas of your mouth treated with radiation due to probable complications in healing.

If any questions or problems arise, please do not hesitate to contact directly.

Sincerely,

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