

Just to Let You Know

We need to know

There are so many patients taking multiple medicines that it is very important you tell Christine about any changes to your health or medication.

It is really useful if patients can provide us with a computer printed list from the pharmacy or doctor.

Some medicines interact with antibiotics and of course knowledge about medication can inform us about your general health.

Many common medicines will cause dry and/or sore mouth and we can provide help and advice to improve the symptoms.

Chemotherapy commonly causes this and we are always keen for patients to come and see us before they start the treatment. One of the side effects of chemotherapy is inflammation of the mouth lining, thus breaking the first barrier between organisms and the blood stream, as well as a reduction in blood counts, making a person more susceptible to infection. If a person has unhealthy teeth, an infection could arise and, during chemotherapy, spread due to the low blood counts. An infection in the bloodstream can make a person very ill and, may be, life threatening.

Good tooth cleaning (oral hygiene) can eliminate the need for extensive dental work. During therapy, especially with extensive high dose chemotherapy, good oral hygiene will decrease the incidence of in general, and dental side effects. Scheduling a dental appointment one month before starting chemotherapy or radiation therapy can ward off serious complications that may force doctors to delay cancer treatment.

Chemotherapy and radiation damage healthy tissue, sometimes including tissue in the mouth. Pre-existing dental conditions complicate matters, so patients are urged to see their dentist before cancer treatment begins. It's important for patients to share their complete dental history with their oncologists as well.

Patients need to let their dentist know that they have cancer and let their oncology team know they have dental problems.

If there's enough time to correct the problems, that communication can spare everyone time, money and frustration.

Unaddressed problems "will pop up" during the most inconvenient times and stop or significantly alter the quality of their cancer therapy.

So, please come and see us and let us give your teeth a good clean, identify any areas which need special attention and give advice in the event of the nasty tastes and dry mouth problems (don't suffer in silence).

Once undergoing chemotherapy look out for :

- Painful mouth and gums.
 - Dry mouth.
 - Burning, peeling, or swelling tongue.
 - Infection.
 - Change in taste
- and if necessary give us a call.

Out of Hours emergency
Always call the practice for instructions in dealing with this as the number can change