

Other notes:

Your speech pathologist is:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Hours: _____

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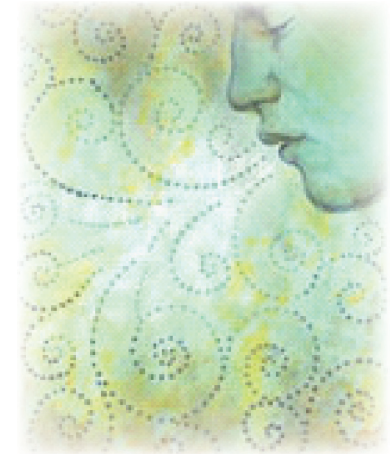
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Speech Pathology and Radiation Oncology

Humidification



health · care · people

What is Humidification?

Humidification is the process that happens where air is warmed and moistened as you breathe in. Your body naturally humidifies air as it passes through your nose, mouth and throat.



Why do some patients who have radiation therapy need humidification?

Radiation therapy to the head and neck can have a drying effect on the lining of the mouth and throat due to decreased saliva. This dry feeling in your mouth and throat can be very uncomfortable. Many radiation therapy patients say their mouth is very dry on waking. This dryness in your mouth can also cause pain when swallowing and lead to mouth sores. If you are having radiation in the neck area this drying effect can also occur in your voice box which can cause a change to your voice quality.

Humidification helps compensate for the lack of saliva and can make thick saliva easier to swallow or spit out. It can also moisten the mouth and throat and help reduce the pain in the mouth and pain when swallowing.

What is the speech pathologist's role?

Your speech pathologist is a specialist in managing swallowing difficulties. They have a good understanding of the role good humidification has in helping taste, chewing, and swallowing. They can help give advice on humidification as it is important for patients undergoing radiation therapy.

What humidification system should I use?

There are a few options when using humidification.

Devices commercially available, to buy or hire (from your chemist):

- You can attach a humidification system to your nose or face. This can then be used during the day or when you are sleeping.
- You can humidify the whole room (eg. Vaporisers) when you go to sleep at night.
- Some radiation oncology units may have a humidifier available for use before or after your treatment.

Home remedy ideas

- When showering, close all the windows and doors and allow the room to get steamy and breathe in the hot, moist air.
- Place a towel over your head over a sink/ bowl of steaming hot water. Let the water cool slightly before using it. Breathe the steam from the hot water. Be very careful not to burn yourself.



When to use humidification

Humidification can be used as frequently as needed. It is recommended that you use humidification at least several times a day if you experience a dry mouth or thick saliva. You can use humidification when sleeping and when sitting for long periods of time.

You can discuss humidification options further with your nurse, physiotherapist and or speech pathologist.

