Assess the patient’s oral cavity and their ability to self care. Score (1-3) as per the rating scale. The total score indicates the level of intervention and frequency of assessment as per the table on page 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Voice**
1. normal
2. deeper or raspy
3. difficulty talking

**Swallow:**
1. normal
2. pain on swallowing
3. unable to swallow

**Mucous membranes:**
1. pink and moist
2. red or coated
3. ulcerations +/- bleeding

**Saliva:**
1. watery
2. thick or ropy
3. absent

**Tongue:**
1. pink and moist
2. coated or shiny +/- bleeding
3. ulcerations +/- bleeding

**Lips:**
1. smooth, pink and moist
2. dry/cracked
3. bleeding/ulcerated

**Gums:**
1. pink and firm
2. oedematous +/- redness
3. spontaneous bleeding

**Teeth/dentures:**
1. clean, no debris
2. localised plaque, debris
3. generalised plaque and debris

**Ability to maintain nutrition:**
1. normal diet
2. soft diet
3. fluids only or nil by mouth

**Analgesic requirements:**
1. none
2. topical analgesia
3. systemic analgesia

**Evidence of infection:**
1. no evidence
2. some evidence visible
3. infection (viral/fungal)

**Taste:**
1. normal
2. impaired/changed
3. no taste

**Self care assessment:**
1. perform oral care by self
2. needs encouragement and education
3. unwilling/unable to perform oral care
Add a score of 9 for patients with head and neck cancer or receiving high dose chemotherapy or radiotherapy to the oral cavity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total assessment score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervention level (1, 2 or 3) – see tables below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor’s signature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment scores**

Assess and identify the risks of oral complications using the oral assessment tool and decide on the level of intervention and frequency of assessment based on the oral score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment score</th>
<th>13-20</th>
<th>21-26</th>
<th>27-39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervention level</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>At least once daily</td>
<td>At least twice daily</td>
<td>At least 8 hourly (each shift)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of mouth care</td>
<td>4 times a day</td>
<td>2 to 4 hourly</td>
<td>1 to 2 hourly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analgesia</td>
<td>As required</td>
<td>Regular and breakthrough</td>
<td>Regular and breakthrough or continuous and breakthrough</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nursing interventions**

### Level 1 interventions
- brush teeth or dentures after each meal and before going to bed with a soft toothbrush or 4 times a day
- dentures should be removed when the patient is at rest
- rinse with sodium bicarbonate or salt water for 30 seconds after meals and before bed or 4 times a day
- apply aqueous cream to lips if dry or cracked

### Level 2 interventions in addition to level 1
- increase the frequency of level 1 interventions to 2-4 hourly
- refer to dietician
- provide regular analgesia as required
- any ulcerations and visible infection should be swabbed and sent for fungal, bacterial and viral culture and sensitivity

### Level 3 interventions in addition to level 2
- increase the frequency of level 2 interventions to 1-2 hourly
- use sponge sticks instead of soft toothbrush
- medical review