

## **RADIOTHERAPY ORL**

Radiotherapy to the head and neck provokes the most secondary effects because of certain characteristics in these areas. There will be a strong irritation and inflammation of the mucosa of the nose, mouth, pharynx and oesophagus, which provoke the secondary effects in these specific areas.

It is very frequent to have mucosites and dryness of the mouth due to the lack of salivation, this can provoke fungal infections, loss of fluoride in the teeth and irritation of gums, disfagia (pain swallowing), cough, lack of appetite, nausea, vomiting and skin irritations. You should be aware that during the treatments you will feel worse, but you mustn't give up and you will have to overcome these difficulties so as to complete the treatments with success. For this reason it is convenient you take the following precautions and listen to your doctor's advice.

The skin and area treated can become irritated and dry causing peeling.

### **PRECAUTIONS DURING THE RADIOTHERAPY OF ORL:**

In the case of head and neck radiotherapy we advise the following during the treatment:

#### **SKIN**

- ▶ Apply on and around the treated area, **BIAFINE, BEPANTHENE, SATIVA (in emulsion or cream)** – **3x a day (morning, afternoon, night)** especially to the more sensitive areas. You should also apply the cream on the back of the neck because there are some treatments that are done to this area and on the superior part of the collarbone, if this is the case. Check all the marks on your body where you are going to be treated and ***apply the cream on all of those marks.***
- ▶ Avoid clothing with fibre that touches the area undergoing treatment; try to only wear clothes made of 100% cotton.
- ▶ Avoid shaving and after-shaves. You'll notice after a couple of weeks of treatment that your hair will start falling out (it will grow back later once all the treatments are finished).
- ▶ In the more severe cases you can apply a cream with cortico steroids, **BETNOVATE (cream)**. This should be ***mixed in equal parts with the cream you already using*** and should be applied ***3-4x a day.*** The **doctor** should always **recommend the use** of this cream.

#### **ORAL / MOUTH**

- ▶ During the treatment, you will need to use toothpaste rich in fluoride so as to strengthen the teeth. Apply **ELMEX com aninoflúor** - ***2x a day leaving it on for 10 minutes at a time.***
- ▶ The appearance of xerostomia (lack of saliva) should be compensated artificially or with products that produce saliva. Apply **ORAL BALANCE GEL** or **XEROLACER** ***every 2 hours.***
- ▶ As a result from the lack of salivation and due to the irritation of the mouth mucosa, fungal infections can appear frequently. You should use **MYCOSTATIN suspensão oral** - ***2 dropper measures 4x a day. Leave the medicine in your mouth for as long as possible, gargle and then swallow it.*** If you suffer from diabetes, then use **DIFULCAN 50**, 1 tablet a day.
- ▶ It is advisable to maintain the mouth as healthy and as disinfected as possible, therefore during the treatment, you should use **TAMTUM VERDE** ***very diluted in water 2-3x a day.***

- ▶ The mouth and oesophageal mucosa will be very fragile and very sensitive; therefore it is convenient to be aware of the foods you eat so as to make it easier to digest. Have a **SOFT DIET**, mashed foods, soups and ***porridges various times a day in small quantities***. Avoid hot / very warm foods, have ***luke-warm or cold foods***. In certain cases it becomes quite difficult to have an adequate and well balanced diet. In these cases you should take some vitamin complexes, like **NUTRIDRINK and FORTIMEL** *once a day*.
- ▶ In the worst cases where eating becomes impossible, you will need a **nasogastric tube**.
- ▶ The difficulty with swallowing will become progressively worse, it'll then become necessary to take something to protect the oesophagus mucosa before each meal. Take **1 sachet of ULCERMIN** *5minutes before each meal*. Apply **G.U.M. ALOCLAIR GEL** on the more sensitive areas of the mouth *various times a day*. Gargle with **GEL CLAIR mixed with water 3x a day**, do *not eat* for at least *an hour* after gargling.
- ▶ The dryness of the mouth should be treated with lots of liquids (**1-2 litres of water per day**), aerosol pumps (pumps used by the asthmatics, with saline water) and suction of secretions.
- ▶ In the case of bacterial infections we will medicate you with an antibiotic and inflammatory.