



SIALORRHEA

WHAT IS IT: excessive saliva or drooling, usually beyond the margin of the mouth

WHY IT HAPPENS: ALS affects the muscular system, and as such, as the tongue and throat muscles weaken, they are unable to automatically swallow built up saliva in the mouth, resulting in drooling

TREATMENTS

MEDICATIONS:

- Antidepressants: used for side effect of dry mouth (e.g. Amitriptyline, Imipramine and Clomipramine)
- Anticholinergic drugs: also used for side effect of dry mouth (e.g. Benadryl, Ditropan, Levsin, Glycopyrrolate)
- Transderm V/Scopolamine Patches (motion sickness medication) used for side effect of dry mouth
- Several of these medications require a prescription

PORTABLE SUCTION MACHINE:

- removes excessive secretions and keeps the mouth and airway clear
- requires order from Dr. Turnbull which can be forwarded to your case manager at the CCAC.

BOTULINUM TOXIN (BOTOX) INJECTIONS:

- Injected into parotid and submandibular glands and works by blocking acetylcholine release from nerve endings (prevents gland from producing saliva)
- Takes 7-10 days for maximum effect and decreases saliva by-60% in half the patients, and after a third injection, effective in 75% of patients
- One treatments lasts for approximately 5 months
- Approximately \$400 per injection. Cost sometimes covered by government via section 8 (takes several months before approval received) and private insurance companies

PHLEGM

WHAT IT IS: unlike sialorrhea phlegm refers to thick secretions usually at the back of the throat that are hard to clear or cough up

WHY IT HAPPENS: Usually caused by dry mouth (due to mouth breathing) and the inability to cough (due to muscle weakness). Sometimes too much medication for sialorrhea may cause buildup of phlegm. So it is important to try and find a balance when treating sialorrhea.

TREATMENTS

ENZYMES:

- Papaya juice contains an enzyme called papain and pineapple juice contains an enzyme called bromelain both known to break down mucus and phlegm.
- Meat Tenderizers: containing papain or bromelain which are enzymes known to break down mucus and phlegm

NASAL SPRAYS:

- Atrovent (used in mouth): requires prescription
- Nasonex (used in nose): requires a prescription
- Usually take 7-10 days for maximum effect to take place

NEBULIZER:

- Machine used to get medicine into the lungs; changes liquid medicine and water into a mist which can then be inhaled through a mouthpiece or mask
- Nebulized saline (salt water) can thin secretions enough for them to be coughed or suctioned out
- Requires order from Dr. Turnbull which can be forwarded to your case manager at the CCAC.

COUGH ASSIST MACHINE or ASSISTED COUGH WITH BREATH STACKER:

- Used to clear broncho-pulmonary secretions to reduce the risk of respiratory complications
- Benefits any patient with an ineffective cough due to paralysis of respiratory muscles
- First applies a positive pressure to the airway, and then rapidly shifts to negative pressure; the rapid shift produces a high expiratory flow from the lungs to simulate a cough
- Available through the ALS Clinic

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