



ORAL HEALTH GUIDE FOR HHT PATIENTS

THE FACTS

HHT is a rare hereditary genetic disorder which causes vascular malformations in many organs. When these malformations appear on the skin and the mucosa they are called Telangiectases. 75% of patients present with telangiectases which become visible from the age of 30 yrs onwards, increasing in size and number. Oral telangiectases can appear on the tongue, lips, inner cheeks, palate and gums, and they range between 1 and 7mm in diameter.

HHT patients should pay special attention to oral and dental hygiene; otherwise their quality of life could be considerably impaired and consequences could even be life-threatening.

CONSEQUENCES AND RISKS OF ORAL TELANGIECTASES

1. Bleeding

Telangiectases can easily rupture, especially in the oral mucosa, causing haemorrhages which are sometimes difficult for the patient to control. We should bear in mind that the oral mucosa is very thin compared to the skin, and therefore oral vascular malformations have very little protection - making them more prone to bleeding.

How to avoid bleeding of oral telangiectases

- Use a soft-bristled toothbrush
- Floss only in areas free of telangiectases
- Avoid hard, hot and irritating foods
- Use lip sunscreen in the event of sun exposure
- Keep your dental prosthesis (if you use one) in good condition, making sure that it fits properly and does not damage the gums or irritate telangiectases.

What to do in case of bleeding of oral telangiectases

- Wash hands thoroughly
- Locate the source of bleeding
- Use finger pressure (on gauze) on the bleeding point for 15 minutes to stop bleeding. The gauze can be soaked in tranexamic acid. Repeat until bleeding stops.
- If you are unable to control the bleeding go to your nearest hospital Emergency dept..

2. Brain Abscess

HHT patients with lung AVMs (arteriovenous malformations) are at increased risk of suffering brain abscesses following dental procedures. Bacteria resident within the mouth can migrate into the bloodstream and pass through lung AVMs towards the brain.

How to prevent brain abscess from oral bacteria

Personal Oral Health Care

- Brush your teeth thoroughly after every meal
- Drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration and plaque build-up
- Avoid smoking
- Keep your dental prosthesis (if you use one) clean and properly disinfect your mouth by using an oral antiseptic mouthwash

Professional Oral Care and Procedures

Inform your dentist that you suffer from HHT or that you may suffer from it due to family history. If the dentist is not familiar with the disease, inform him/her appropriately. You can also suggest that he/she contacts your referring HHT doctor.

Have regular check-ups. Gum problems (gingivitis, periodontal disease), cavities, or any other oral conditions you may have should be treated as soon as possible.

Antibiotic Prophylaxis These should be used during any invasive dental procedure where lung AVMs have not been treated or where screening of the lungs has not yet been performed.

Suggested dosage:

Amoxicillin by mouth - Adults: 2gr. Children: 50mg/kg body weight. Single dose 60 minutes before procedure.

In case of penicillin allergy: Clindamycin oral: Adults: 600mg. Children: 20mg/kg.

This document was prepared by HHT Ireland in collaboration with Dr Adrian Brady from the national HHT Centre, Mercy University Hospital, Cork.

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