

Radiation Therapy, Dental Implications and Care

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I. Introduction

Patients receiving radiation therapy to the head and neck have a high risk for developing oral complications. Because of the risk of osteonecrosis in irradiated fields, it is necessary to remove any impacted, badly decayed teeth, or teeth that have periodontal disease prior to the start of radiation therapy. Some patients may need a good oral hygiene. Routine dental checkups are extremely important to monitor patient's dental health and to detect any problems that might develop after radiation therapy.

II. Case Presentation

<Case I>

1. Sex/age : M/39
2. Chief Complaint : Chewing difficult on upper right quadrants
3. Past Medical History : Radiation therapy d/t laryngeal carcinoma
4. Present Illness : Multiple decayed state
5. Impression : Multiple dental caries
6. Tx plan : Restorative & preventive care, patient oral hygiene education

<Case II>

1. Sex/age : M/67
2. Chief Complaint : Referred from the LDC
3. Past Medical History : Chemo- & Radiation therapy d/t lymphom
4. Present Illness : Pus discharge via sinus tract on #24,25 vestibular area
5. Impression : Osteoradionecrosis on left maxilla
6. Tx plan : Endodontic treatment on #24 & Antibiotic therapy

III. Conclusions

Radiation therapy in the head and neck cancer patient can cause a number of problems in the oral cavity. Before, during, and after radiation therapy, to create and maintain a healthy oral hygiene will help the clinician to prevent these problems. This can result in better health and a higher quality of life for patients.