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What you can do to relieve oral mucositis in your cancer patients.

Cancer treatment can be a daunting and difficult process. Even modest efforts to ease patients' distress and discomfort can potentially make a significant impact on their overall wellbeing. While various palliative measures can be taken to ease commonly-recognised side effects such as nausea and fatigue, one such complication, typically characterised by numerous lesions presenting in the mouth, is often very difficult to effectively treat: oral mucositis.

"Oncology therapies are best implemented as an uninterrupted treatment course, but the adverse effects of chemotherapy and radiotherapy can often throw the regimen off track at great disadvantage to the patient," said **Associate Professor Andrew Spencer, head of malignant haematology at a leading Melbourne hospital.** "By easing the symptoms of oral mucositis, a patient's distress is minimised thereby helping carers maintain an optimum treatment schedule."

What is oral mucositis?	Who does it affect?
<p>Oral mucositis is a common complication amongst patients undergoing standard and high-dose chemotherapy and radiotherapy. It causes painful lesions in the mouth and on and around the tongue.^{1,2}</p> <p>These lesions or ulcers can cause patients extreme pain and often hinder their ability to eat, drink, swallow and even speak and can lead to secondary complications for the patient such as poor nutrition and dehydration.¹⁻³ Furthermore, the condition when severe can result in interruption or cessation of oncology treatment.</p>	<p>The incidence of oral mucositis in your patients varies depending on the type of cancer therapy they are receiving. It affects approximately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 40% of patients undergoing standard chemotherapy³• 80% of patients receiving radiotherapy to the head and neck.³• 50% - 100% of patients undergoing high dose chemotherapy or total body irradiation in bone marrow transplantation³

Currently, oral mucositis may be managed in patients with treatments such as local anaesthetics, corticosteroids and topical anti-inflammatory agents.¹

Gelclair is an oral gel approved for the management and relief of pain associated with oral mucositis resulting from chemotherapy and radiotherapy, irritation from oral surgery, dentures or disease. The concentrated gel forms a protective coating over the oral mucosa, shielding the nerve endings from over stimulation and thereby providing pain relief.^{1,2} The coating enables the damaged mucosal tissues to be lubricated and hydrated, which may improve the patients' ability to eat and drink.^{1,2}

Gelclair may offer a unique management option for pain relief allowing partial or full restoration of normal eating and drinking in patients with painful oral lesions.¹ Its favourable lubricating, hydrating and coating action provides effective, long lasting pain relief.¹ Furthermore, Gelclair is pleasant tasting¹ and does not irritate, sting or burn and no serious adverse events have been reported.²



“Because oncology patients are subject to a barrage of discouraging and debilitating side effects, any comfort-providing measure is useful,” said **Dr Ian Irving, a Director of Oncology Services in Queensland**, “I strongly encourage all carers to examine every available option in their daily efforts to maintain the wellbeing of their patients.”

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