Oral Manifestations and Considerations

Oral
- Early onset severe periodontal disease (most significant oral health problem)
- Lower prevalence of dental caries
- Delayed eruption of permanent teeth, malocclusion
- Congenitally missing and malformed teeth are common
- Hypoplasia of mid-facial region
- Hypodontia, microdontia,
- Macroglossia, fissured and protruding tongue
- Tongue thrust, bruxism, clenching, mouth breathing

Other Potential Disorders/Concerns
- Epilepsy
- Cardiac defects
- Atlantoaxial instability (fragility of cervical vertebrae/spinal chord)
- Diabetes
- Compromised immune system
- Sleep apnea
- Increased risk of leukemia
- Hearing loss
- Vision problems
- Hypothyroidism

Oral Side Effects of Commonly Prescribed Medications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMPTOM</th>
<th>MEDICATION</th>
<th>SIDE EFFECTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seizures</td>
<td>Anti-convulsants (Dilantin)</td>
<td>Gingival hyperplasia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td>Calcium channel blockers</td>
<td>Xerostomia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent/Caregiver Support and Anticipatory Guidance

- Discuss with parents if antibiotics are needed for dental treatment
- Discourage consumption of cariogenic foods and beverages
- Prescribe sugar-free medications if available
- Recommend preventive measures such as topical fluoride and sealants
- Advise the use of fluoridated toothpaste twice daily and support the family in following dental care instructions
- Instruct caregiver on appropriate protocol following dental trauma (seek immediate professional care and locate/preserve missing tooth)
- Recommend rinsing with water thoroughly after taking each dose of sugar containing medication and frequent water intake for patients taking xerostomic medication
- Review safety issues appropriate to the age of the child, such as car seats, stair gates, bike helmets and mouth guards to prevent oral-facial trauma
- Discuss habits that may harm the child's teeth such as propping baby bottles, putting child to bed with bottle
- Refer to dentist any oral developmental abnormalities

Further information (Medical Anticipatory Guidance, Dental Anticipatory Guidance, Oral Health Guidance for parents/Caregivers and Dental Professional Fact Sheet for Down syndrome) can be found at: http://dental.washington.edu/departments/omed/decod/special_needs_facts.php

References


Additional Resources

- NIH Institute for Down Syndrome
- Special Care: an Oral Health Professionals Guide to Serving Young Children with Special Health Care Needs
- Bright Futures Oral Health Pocket Guide
- American Academy of Pediatrics Oral Health Initiative
- MCH Resource Center
- ASTDD-Special Needs
- Block Oral Disease, MA
- NOHIC-NIDCR publications