

Wiping Mouths

When a child's mouth is very wet, it is necessary to dry it. However, the way in which this is done is important, as it can help or hinder progress.

Do not's

1. Do not push the child's head back when wiping the mouth.
2. Do not wipe the mouth unless it is necessary.
3. Do not suddenly wipe the mouth.
4. Do not wipe it without letting the child see (or feel a tactile cue) that the cloth is approaching.
5. Do not use a large piece of flannel, tissue or other material that will touch the sides of the face as well as the mouth. This often increases saliva production, as it provides so much stimulation.
6. Do not wipe the mouth quickly.
7. As far as possible, do not tell the child to swallow. Swallowing is often impossible if the mouth is open and the saliva is on the chin, bib or table. Being told to swallow may make the children self-conscious and anxious.
8. Do not wipe using light movements - they are overstimulating.

Do's

1. Do maintain the child in a good trunk and head position.
2. Do use a small tight wodge of absorbent material that will only touch the child's mouth.
3. Do let the child see or feel the approaching cloth.
4. Do approach at a reasonable rate - not too fast or too slow.
5. Do wipe slowly and firmly, using up to three 'pressure dabs', as shown in Figure 30. Start on the side of the mouth which is more easily tolerated by the child.

Try it on yourself. If you have done it correctly you should feel the after-effects which encourage you to keep your lips together.



Figure 30 - Pressure dabs
Note: Use slowly and firmly

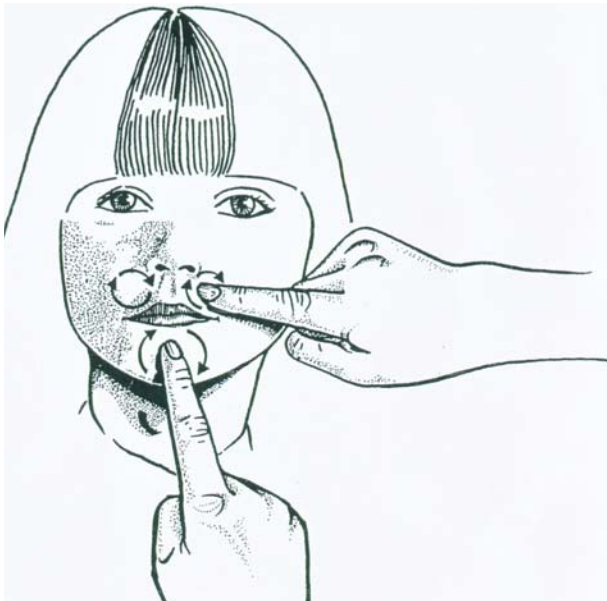


Figure 31a - Oral Stimulation
Note: Small-range circular massage around the mouth may provide helpful stimulation.

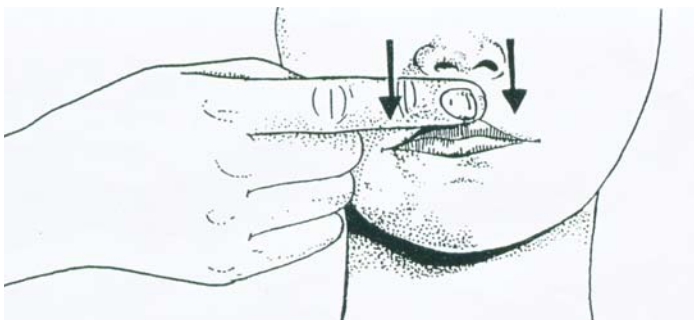


Figure 31b - Stimulating a swallow
Note: Pressure in a slightly downward direction may help to stimulate a swallow.