

## Oral Assessment Guide for Children and Young People

Category	Method of assessment	1	2	3
<b>Swallow</b>	Ask the child to swallow or observe the swallowing process. Ask the parent if there are any notable changes.	Normal. Without difficulty	Difficulty in swallowing	Unable to swallow at all Pooling, dribbling of secretions
<b>Lips and corner of mouth</b>	Observe appearance of tissue	Normal Smooth, pink and moist	Dry, cracked or swollen	Ulcerated or bleeding
<b>Tongue</b>	Observe the appearance of the tongue using a pen-torch to illuminate	Normal Firm without fissures (cracking or splitting) or prominent papilla Pink and moist	Coated or loss of papillae with a shiny appearance with or without redness and/or oral <i>Candida</i>	Ulcerated, sloughing or cracked
<b>Saliva</b>	Observe consistency and quality of saliva	Normal Thin and watery	Excess amount of saliva, drooling	Thick, ropy or absent
<b>Mucous membrane</b>	Observe the appearance of tissue using a pen-torch to illuminate the oral cavity	Normal Pink and moist	Reddened or coated without ulceration and/or oral <i>Candida</i>	Ulceration and sloughing with or without bleeding
<b>Gingivae</b>	Observe the appearance of tissue using a pen-torch to illuminate the oral cavity	Normal Pink or coral with a stippled (dotted) surface Gum margins tight and well defined, no swelling	Oedematous with or without redness, smooth	Spontaneous bleeding
<b>Teeth</b> (if no teeth score 1)	Observe the appearance of teeth using a pen-torch to illuminate the oral cavity	Normal Clean and no debris	Plaque or debris in localised areas	Plaque or debris generalised along gum line
<b>Voice</b>	Talk and listen to the child Ask the parent if there are any notable changes	Normal tone and quality when talking or crying	Deeper or raspy	Difficult to talk, cry or not talking at all

**NB: if score >8 introduce pain assessment instrument**

Oral assessment guide – Adapted from Eilers et al. (1988) by the mouth care working party at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust (2005).  
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