

Non-nutritive sucking

Standard

All infants who fulfil the criteria as being suitable to engage in non-nutritive sucking (NNS) will have the opportunity to do so in a safe and regulated manner.

Equipment

Correct size dummy, microwaveable sterilising bag

Procedure

- Assess infant's suitability and need for NNS (see note 1).
- Gain consent from parents and give them information leaflet.
- The dummy may be rinsed in sterile water.

- Swipe the dummy across the infant's lips.
- When the mouth opens, place the dummy into the mouth.
- Allow the infant to suck for a few minutes before and during an invasive procedure. If being used to calm the infant, allow the infant to suck until calm and resting quietly; if being used to enhance oral feeding, let the infant suck during the gastric feed and for a few minutes afterwards.

- After using the dummy, wash with hot soapy water, rinse and sterilise prior to next use.
- Assess the infant's response to and toleration of NNS and document this in the appropriate notes.

Potential complications

Oral infection

Notes

1. NNS is a non-invasive technique for calming distressed infants, for providing non-therapeutic pain relief, for increasing intra-oral pressure in infants receiving CPAP and is a method of enhancing oral feeding outcome. There is no evidence to suggest NNS disadvantages breast feeding in the premature infant. The practice is recommended as a treatment and used for a limited time. As with all therapies, parents are informed of the need for the therapy (see parent leaflet on NNS)

References

Franck LS. Lawhon G. (1998) Environmental and behavioral strategies to prevent and manage neonatal pain. *Seminars in Perinatology*. 22(5):434-43

Pinelli J. Symington A. Non-nutritive sucking for the promotion of physiologic stability and nutrition in preterm infants. *The Cochrane Library (Oxford)* ** 2000 issue 4

Rochat P. Goubet N. Shah BL. (1997) Enhanced sucking engagement by preterm infants during intermittent gavage feedings. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*. 18(1):22-6,

Schubiger G. Schwarz U. Tonz O. (1997) UNICEF/WHO baby-friendly hospital initiative: does the use of bottles and pacifiers in the neonatal nursery prevent successful breastfeeding? *Neonatal Study Group. European Journal of Pediatrics*. 156(11):874-7,