DID YOU KNOW?

Germs in your mouth can cause pneumonia.

IT’S TRUE

Germs in your mouth can grow while you’re in the hospital, leading to infection. One of these infections, while rare, is pneumonia, an infection of the lungs.

Pneumonia can have serious consequences, such as:

- **Extra days in the hospital** (longer than 1 week) and additional medications
- **Spending time in the ICU**
- **Need for care at a skilled nursing facility**
- **Higher costs for your hospital stay**

HOW CAN MOUTH GERMS CAUSE PNEUMONIA?

Mouth germs can reproduce **up to every 5 hours**.

Germs in your mouth that cause pneumonia **can get into the lungs** because there’s a direct connection between your mouth and lungs.

DON’T LET PNEUMONIA START IN YOUR MOUTH
A proven way YOU and your nurse can partner to prevent pneumonia is **TAKING CARE OF YOUR MOUTH**

**3 EASY STEPS**

**FOR ORAL HEALTH IN THE HOSPITAL:**

1. **BRUSH** your teeth for 1-2 minutes after meals and at bedtime. Don’t forget to brush your tongue!
   
   Brushing removes sticky film in your mouth that contains bacteria.

2. **RINSE** with a mouthwash (30 seconds, as directed)
   
   Rinsing kills bacteria and helps clean parts of the mouth that brushing can’t reach.

3. **USE** a lip moisturizer
   
   Using a non–petroleum-based lip moisturizer prevents cracked lips.

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**IF YOU DON’T HAVE ANY OF THESE ITEMS, ASK YOUR NURSE**

**Brushing your teeth 3-4 times a day and using a rinse 2 times a day*** helps keep the overall germ load in your mouth low, which lowers the risk of acquiring pneumonia, and may help you avoid a longer stay in the hospital.

*Or as directed by your health care professional.

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**REMEMBER: A HEALTHY MOUTH IS PART OF HELPING YOUR BODY STAY HEALTHY**