

DECREASING DROOLING

Strong smelling salvia can be very noticeable on a student's hands and clothing. It is an important social issue to deal with in relation to their time spent with both adults and peers. Often, the student does not have a lot of control over their drooling. However, with support from caregivers and therapists, we may be able to assist the student in managing this behavior more effectively.

The following strategies may be considered:

- **Oral Sensory Stimulation** – Strawberry, banana or vanilla extract soaked on a cotton swab, and placed on the sides of the tongue is shown to decrease the frequency of drools (Hammen, 2019).
- **Positioning** – When the student is well positioned in sitting or standing the student may be more able to straighten the upper back, tuck the chin down and close the mouth, without hanging the head forward, such as by tilting the wheelchair slightly back. Or try a slant board for reading/art materials to keep the head up. This may reduce the effect of gravity on the spilling of saliva.
- **Stimulation of hands** – When the student is weight-bearing on their arms the student is less able to bring hands to mouth. Keeping hands out of the mouth may lessen the production of saliva.
- **Infinity scarfs/bandanas** – These can be worn to protect the student's tops and jackets. They should be changed frequently as they may carry an odour. A wrist sweat band can be worn to teach the student to wipe their own mouth.
- **Firm patting** - Pat firmly on the mouth area, rather than wipe sideways, when you need to clean up the student's face at any time. Try a warm, wet cloth or disposable wipe that will not irritate the skin. Other **facial stimulation techniques** that support swallowing frequency include: icing, brushing, vibration, manipulation (tapping, stroking, patting).
- **Simplify the activity** – When the student is involved with activities using their hands, increased saliva may be produced because of the effort being exerted. Consider simplifying the activity to require less effort as a way to reduce drooling.

References:

Hammen, Vicki. (2019). SENSORY STIMULATION TO DECREASE DROOLING IN A SCHOOL-AGED CHILD.

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