

Toothettes, are convenient for cleansing the mouth and teeth. Lips are coated with ointment to protect them from drying, cracking, or blistering.

Unconscious children are prone to eye irritation. The corneal reflexes are absent; therefore, the eyes are easily irritated or damaged by linen, dust, or other substances that may come in contact with them. Excessive dryness results from incomplete closure of the lids or decreased secretions, especially if the child is undergoing osmotherapy to reduce or prevent cerebral edema.

Nursing Alert

The eyes are examined regularly and carefully for early signs of irritation or inflammation. Artificial tears are placed in the eyes every 1 to 2 hours. Eye patches may be necessary to protect the eyes from possible damage.

Positioning and Exercise

The unconscious child is positioned to minimize ICP and to prevent aspiration of saliva, nasogastric secretions, and vomitus. The head of the bed is elevated, and the child is placed in a side-lying or semiprone position. A small, firm pillow is placed under the head, and the uppermost limbs are flexed and supported with pillows. The weight of the body should not rest on the dependent arm. In the semiprone position, the child lies with the dependent arm at the side behind the body, the opposite side supported on pillows, and the uppermost arm and leg flexed and resting on the pillows. This position prevents undue pressure on the dependent extremities. The dependent position of the face encourages drainage of secretions and prevents the flaccid tongue from obstructing the airway.

Immobilization in the unconscious child causes effects on the muscular, skeletal, and integumentary system. See [Chapter 29](#) and [Table 29-1](#) for physical effects of immobilization. Normal range-of-motion exercises help maintain function, minimize contractures of joints, and prevent skin breakdown. Perform exercises gently to minimize increasing ICP. Place a small rolled pad in the palms to help maintain proper position of fingers. Footboards or high-top shoes can help prevent foot drop; and in some cases splinting is