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# Nutrition Therapy During Head and Neck Cancer Treatment

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## Items to help deal with thick saliva:

- Make sure you are drinking adequate fluid! Focus on non-caffeinated liquids and aim for 8-12 cups per day.
- Try 100% papaya juice or pineapple juice (but avoid if mouth/throat is sore)
- Coconut milk
- Baking soda/salt water rinse (1 tsp soda, ¾ tsp salt, 4 cups water)

## Items to help with sore mouth:

- Yogurt (plain or vanilla)
- Buttermilk
- Honey and warm water
- Aloe juice or water
- Low acid juices such as pear, peach, apricot nectar

## Items to help with dry mouth:

- Always carry a water bottle for drinking fluids
- Oral Sprays
- Thyme tea (1 sprig thyme in coffee cup, pour hot water over). Let cool to desired temperature and drink.

## Eat adequate protein and carbs to help maintain muscle and energy:

- Carbohydrates
  - Pasta
  - Cereal (hot cereal is easy to fortify)
  - Tender, peeled fruits and vegetables
- Protein foods
  - Eggs
  - Cottage cheese (full-fat for added calories)
  - Milk (whole or half & half)
  - Yogurt
  - Beans
  - Peas
  - Tofu (easy to blend, minimal taste)
  - Powdered milk
  - Protein powder – unflavored variety can be mixed in cream soups, mashed potatoes, hot cereal, etc.

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## **Resources:**

- [Oncologynutrition.org](https://www.oncologynutrition.org) (Oncology Nutrition)
- [SPOHNC.org](https://www.spoync.org) (Support for Persons with Oral, Head, and Neck Cancer)
- [HeadandNeck.org](https://www.headandneck.org) (Head and Neck Cancer Alliance)

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