Soft Foods for Sore Mouth/Throat

Tips for managing pain:

- Eat soft foods with added moisture (see list of foods to try on page 2).
    - Add sauces or gravies to meat, poultry, potatoes, pasta, and vegetables.
    - Add syrup, jelly, jam, soft tub margarine, butter or milk to bread, pancakes, waffles, and hot cereals.
- If soft, moist foods are too tough to eat, try pureeing your foods in a blender or food processor.
- Eat and drink foods and beverages that are cold or room temperature. Use a straw if needed. Ice chips and popsicles can help numb the mouth.
- Make sure to drink plenty of fluids each day. Let carbonated drinks stand for a while at room temperature to get rid of some of the bubbles.
- If you are experiencing unintentional weight loss, try drinking high-calorie, high-protein drinks such as milkshakes, powdered instant breakfast drinks mixed with whole milk, eggnog, or commercial protein shakes throughout the day.
- Keep your mouth clean. Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush as tolerated. Swish/gargle with a mild solution of ¾ teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon baking soda and 1 quart water before meals to help reduce soreness. DO NOT swallow the solution. Avoid alcohol-based mouthwashes.

Things to *avoid* when having mouth or throat pain:

- Very hot foods or drinks
- Acidic foods or juices (such as orange, grapefruit, lemon, lime or tomato)
- Spicy foods
- Hard or crunchy foods such as dry toast or crackers
- Alcohol and tobacco
- Carbonated beverages

Let your doctor know if you are having sore mouth or throat symptoms. There are medications that may help.

Soft Foods Ideas:

- Try to eat foods from a variety of groups to help you get enough nutrition to support your body and energy levels.
    - **<u>NOTE:</u> If you have been seen by a Speech Therapist for difficulty swallowing it is important to follow their recommendations for any food or beverage restrictions in your diet.** Below are *general* guidelines for softer foods to try when you have a sore throat or mouth. A speech therapist may have more specific guidance for you to safely swallow food or beverages.

    - Meat/poultry/fish/meat substitutes/eggs:
        - Meatloaf, meatballs, sausage without casing, salmon or tofu, tender roasts, moist hamburger patties, or other ground meats or ground poultry
        - Chicken, egg, or tuna salad without raw vegetables
        - Prepared, moistened legumes, such as dried beans, lentils or peas
        - Eggs (avoid dry, crunchy edges)

    - Milk and dairy:
        - Dairy milk or plant-based milks such as soy, oat, almond
        - Soft, melted, grated or thinly sliced cheeses
        - Cottage cheese
        - Yogurt (avoid any with crunchy mix ins like granola)

    - Fruit:
        - Baked, canned, cooked, peeled, ripe, skinless, seedless, tender fruit
        - Choose ripe fruits that are easily broken into smaller pieces with a utensil, such as a ripe banana
        - Try sucking on frozen fruit to help numb the mouth
        - Use caution when trying acidic fruits as these may cause pain or irritation (examples include oranges or other citrus and pineapple)

    - Vegetables:
        - Cooked vegetables (baked, steamed, or broiled), moistened with broth or soup as needed
        - Soft, peeled, ripe, skinless, seedless, and tender varieties
        - Vegetable juices (caution with tomato juice which may cause pain or irritation due to acidity)

    - Potatoes, Noodles & Rice:
        - Pasta or pasta bakes/casseroles
        - Baked, steamed, mashed, or soft/fried potatoes
        - Pasta or potato salad without raw vegetables
        - White, brown, or wild rice with gravy

    - Soups:

        - Soups and stews with soft noodles, tender meats and soft vegetables
    - Breads and cereals:
        - Moist crumbly cakes and biscuits
        - All well-moistened, soft cooked hot cereals
        - Cold cereal soaked in milk to soften it
        - Breads moistened with butter, jam, or gravy
        - Pancakes or French toast moistened with butter and syrup or jelly
    - Desserts:
        - Ice cream, custard, pudding, mousse, gelatin

For any questions about your personal nutrition plan, contact your VA dietitian.