
Sore Mouth/Throat

Some people develop sores in their mouths while going through radiation or chemotherapy. Tender gums or throat are also common side effects of these treatments.

Tips for managing mouth pain

- Eat softer foods such as pudding, soups, mashed potatoes and gravy, custard, casseroles, scrambled eggs, ice cream, Jell-O™, ground or tender meats with gravy/sauces, or hot cereal. Cook food well, until it is very tender.
- Moisten foods with gravies, butter, sauces, or yogurt to make them easier to eat.
- Eat and drink foods and beverages at room temperature or cold items as these can be very soothing. 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.
- Drink high calorie and high protein drinks such as milkshakes, powdered instant breakfast drinks mixed with whole milk, or eggnog throughout the day.
- Keep your mouth clean. Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush as tolerated. Swish/gurgle with mild salt or baking soda and water solution before meals as they may help reduce soreness. Be sure NOT to swallow solution. Avoid alcohol-based mouthwashes.

Things to avoid when having mouth pain

- Very hot foods or beverages
- Citrus juices or acidic items such as orange, grapefruit, or tomato juice
- Spicy foods
- Hard or very 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 that cannot be managed. There are some medications that may help with mouth pain.