

ORAL CARE FOR RADIATION TREATMENT

Mouth sores are areas that might look like little cuts or ulcers in the mouth (also known as mucositis or stomatitis). This is because certain kinds of cancer treatment can damage the cells that line the mouth, throat, and gastrointestinal (GI) tract. This causes sores or ulcers to develop in the affected areas. In some cases, the soreness and sores may extend into the throat and farther down into the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, making eating and swallowing painful. Mouth sores can appear 1 to 2 weeks after treatment starts and may come and go if treatment is given in cycles. Some treatments are more likely to cause mouth sores than others.

Good mouth care is key to help reduce the risk or severity of mouth sores. Using a soft toothbrush or foam swab can help keep the mouth clean and reduce the risk of injuring your gums and lining of the mouth. If you use dental floss, ask your doctor if you should stop or if you can continue to floss.

Certain types of rinses can help to keep your mouth clean and can help soothe discomfort. Mouth rinses with antibiotic agents or steroids might be recommended, depending on how severe the mouth sores are.

Another type of mouth rinse, often referred to as "magic mouthwash" might be recommended by your doctor. Magic mouthwash is a mixed medication mouthwash that combines a few different medicines. But there is not one single combination that's used by all doctors, and some experts don't recommend a combination.

Mouth Rinse Recipe:

- 1 Pint warm water
- 1 Tablespoon Baking Soda
- 1 Teaspoon Salt

Mix ingredients well in a sports bottle or similar container. Use approximately 1-2 oz of mixture swish and spit four times a day, after meals and at bedtime.

If you have been given **Mucoadhesive**, use after mouth rinse.

Swish 5 - 10 cc's of mucoadhesive in mouth and gargle for 60 sec. then swallow.

Wait 1 hour prior to eating and drinking.

TIPS THAT MIGHT HELP INCLUDE:

- Keeping your lips moist with petroleum jelly, a mild lip balm, or cocoa butter.
- Drinking at least 2 to 3 quarts of fluids each day if your health care team approves.
- Asking about medicine that can be swished 15 to 20 minutes before meals or painted on a painful sore with a cotton swab before meals.
- Asking about other medicines to relieve pain.
- Eating chilled foods and fluids (such as Popsicles, ice chips, frozen yogurt, sherbet, or ice cream).
- Eating soft, moist foods that are easy to swallow.
- Using a straw.
- Eating small, frequent meals of bland, moist, non-spicy foods. Avoid raw vegetables and fruits, and other hard, dry, or crusty foods, such as chips or pretzels.
- Avoiding fizzy drinks, alcohol, and tobacco.
- Not eating very salty, spicy, or sugary foods.
- Avoiding acidic fruits and juices, such as tomato, orange, grapefruit, lime, or lemon.

NOTIFY US FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Have redness or shininess in your mouth that lasts for more than 48 hours
- Have bleeding gums
- Notice any type of “cut” or sore in the mouth
- Have a temperature of 100.5° F or higher when taken by mouth
- Have white patches on the tongue or inside the mouth
- Have taken in little food or fluid for 2 days
- Can’t take medicines because of mouth sores

ORAL EXERCISES

Oral exercise is very important to keep muscles in the face and neck from becoming weak. It is best to practice these exercises for short periods of time, on a regular basis. A good target would be 4 times a day.

Voice: Say the vowels A, E, I, O and U.

Say the words MEOW and WHY a few times. Then blow kisses to your favorite person, dog, etc. (If voice is hoarse, continue oral exercises at a whisper)

Jaw: Open your mouth as wide as you can and hold for 5 sec. Imagine you are yawning. Relax and repeat 10 times.

Move your jaw to the right side, hold for 5 sec. Relax.

Move your jaw to the left side, hold for 5 sec. Relax.

Alternate this side-to-side movement 10 times.

Chewing: Imagine you are chewing a piece of toffee. Make your chewing movements big. Alternate between having your lips open and closed. Vary the speed of your chewing. Aim to chew for 60 sec.