

# Medical Oncology

## Sore Mouth Information Sheet

Some anti-cancer drugs can cause sores in the mouth and throat. This is a condition called “stomatitis.” It can often be prevented or lessened by using the following:

Mix 1/8 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon baking soda in 2 cups of warm water. Use a mouthful of this rinse four times per day especially after you eat. Do not swallow, just swish, gargle and spit. You may rinse with fresh water afterwards.

### Tips for Ways to Prevent and Manage Mouth Sores

- Clean your mouth and teeth gently with a soft toothbrush.
- Clean dentures and/or bridge after eating. Leave dentures out if experiencing any discomfort.
- Maintain good nutrition, including high protein and high calorie foods.
- Eat lukewarm or cold foods. When food is very hot it can be irritating.
- Try drinking through a straw.
- Drink large amounts of water or non-acidic juices (for example, apple or grape juice).
- Keep your mouth clean and brush your teeth or rinse mouth after eating.
- Apply lip moisturizer often.
- Eat soft or liquid foods.
- Blend or moisten foods that are dry or solid.

### Avoid

- Spicy, acidic, salty, crunchy, crusty or chewy foods.
- Alcohol, tobacco, carbonated beverages, and caffeine products.
- Mouthwash that contains alcohol.
- Spices that are irritating such as chili powder, cloves, curry, hot sauces, nutmeg, salsa, horseradish and pepper. Instead, choose things like basil, oregano, and thyme.

### Mouth Sores May Include

- A burning feeling in the mouth.
- A red, shiny, sore lining on your mouth, gums, lips or throat.
- A swollen, inflamed tongue.
- White or yellow patches in the mouth.
- Sores in mouth or on lips.
- Pain or any sign of infection (i.e. tongue heavily coated).
- Difficulty eating, drinking and swallowing.
- Feelings of dryness, mild burning or pain, sensitivity to hot or cold foods.

# Medical Oncology

## Sore Mouth Information Sheet

### The Following Foods and Drinks May Be Easier to Eat

- Applesauce
- Casseroles
- Cheeses
- Cooked cereal (like Cream of Wheat or oatmeal)
- Cottage cheese
- Custards and puddings
- Egg salad
- Eggs
- Gelatin
- Gravies
- Ice cream and milkshakes
- Yogurt
- Pancakes
- Eggs
- Mashed potatoes
- Lukewarm soup (choose creamy soup for added calories)
- Tuna or chicken salad
- Soft fruits (not acidic, like peaches, pears, bananas)
- Liquid nutrition supplements (Boost® Ensure®, etc.)

Treatment is based on the extent of the mouth sores.

### Call Your Doctor if:

- Rinsing with a solution of salt, baking soda and warm water does not start to heal the sores.
- Mouth sores are painful.
- You have a temperature of 100.4°F or higher.
- You have any of the following, which could indicate an infection:
  - Soft, white patches
  - Dry, brownish-yellow areas
  - Moist, creamy white areas
  - Painless, dry, yellow ulcers
  - Open areas on the lips or mouth

See the *Chemotherapy and Immunotherapy Patient Guide* book for more information.

If you have questions or concerns, please call your care team at:  
Bronson Cancer Center – Battle Creek 269-245-8660  
Bronson Cancer Center – Kalamazoo 269-286-7170