

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