

# Mouth and Throat Changes



“My mouth felt sore. I let my nurse know right away. He told me about medicine that can help. He also showed me how to make a mouth rinse to use each day.”

## Call your doctor or nurse if you have:

- **Trouble eating or swallowing**
- **White spots in your mouth**
- **Sores on your lips or in your mouth**

## Tell your doctor or nurse if you have:

- Changes in taste or smell
- Dry mouth
- Pain when you eat hot or cold foods

## Take these steps to feel better.

### Clean your mouth with care.

- Brush your teeth and tongue after each meal and before you go to bed. Use a very soft toothbrush.
- Use toothpaste or gel that has fluoride and baking soda in it.
- Rinse your mouth with the baking soda, salt, and water mix in the box below.

### Every 3 hours during the day, mix together:

- **1 cup warm water,**
- **1/4 teaspoon baking soda, and**
- **1/8 teaspoon salt.**

**Take small sips and swish them around in your mouth.**



## Keep your mouth and lips moist.

- Use a lip balm, such as ChapStick®.
- Sip water or suck ice chips.
- Try drinking through a straw.

## Eat soft, bland foods.

- Choose foods that are soft, wet, and easy to swallow. When your mouth is sore, try cooked cereals, mashed potatoes, and scrambled eggs.
- Soften food with gravy, sauce, or other liquids.
- Let food cool down if hot food hurts your mouth.



## Don't have things that can make your mouth hurt.

- **Don't** drink orange, lemon, tomato, or grapefruit juice.
- **Don't** drink alcohol, such as beer or wine.
- **Don't** eat crunchy or spicy foods.
- **Don't** have foods or drinks that have sugar in them, such as candy and soft drinks.
- **Don't** smoke cigarettes or use other tobacco products.

**Ask about medicine for pain if your mouth or throat is sore.**

## Questions to ask your doctor or nurse:

1. What problems should I call you about?
2. What foods and drinks should I have?
3. Can we make the baking soda, salt, and water mix together?
4. If brushing hurts, what are other ways that I can clean my mouth?
5. What medicines can help?

**Visit a dentist at least 2 weeks before you start treatment. Get a copy of the report from your dentist and give it to your doctor or nurse.**

### FREE SERVICES TO LEARN MORE

#### National Cancer Institute Cancer Information Service

**Phone:** 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)  
**TTY:** 1-800-332-8615  
**Online:** [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)  
**Chat Online:** [www.cancer.gov/help](http://www.cancer.gov/help)



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