

Let's Talk ABOUT...

Radiation therapy, anticancer drugs, or infection can cause painful mouth and throat sores. Mouth and throat sores can make eating difficult. Certain foods will irritate an already sore mouth. This makes chewing and swallowing painful.

What will help mouth sores?

The doctor can give your child medication to help with pain and aid healing. You can make eating easier for your child by choosing soft moist foods and taking good care of your child's mouth.

How can I help my child eat?

Try the following if your child has mouth sores:

- Feed your child soft foods that are easy to swallow:
 - Ice-cream
 - Milk shakes or nutritional drinks such as Pediasure™ or instant breakfast.
 - Soft fruit (such as bananas or applesauce)
 - Cottage cheese
 - Custards, puddings, gelatins
 - Puréed vegetables
 - Liquids
- Feed your child soft, moist foods that are cool or at room temperature. Warm and hot foods may irritate a sore mouth and throat.
- Cook foods until they are soft and tender.
- Blend foods in a blender, such as, fruits and vegetables.
- Moisten and soften foods by adding broth, sauces, gravy, or soup.
- Cut food into small pieces and chew food completely.

Mouth and throat sores

- Have your child use a straw so the food goes around the mouth sores.

Are there foods my child should avoid?

Some foods may irritate a sore mouth such as these:

- Foods that contain caffeine such as soda, colas and chocolate.
- Dry foods such as breads, pretzels, chips, and crackers.
- Spicy or salty foods such as potato chips.
- Citrus fruit or juices such as orange, grapefruit or tangerine.

How should I care for my child's mouth?

A sore mouth can increase the risk of cavities and mouth infections. Have your child rinse out his mouth after meals and snacks and brush regularly. Have your child visit the dentist for regular dental care before, during, and after treatment for cancer. Avoid mouthwashes that contain alcohol, which may irritate mouth sores. If your child's teeth and gums are sore, the dentist may be able to recommend a special product to clean teeth.

When should I call the medical team?

Call the medical team if your child has one or more of these:

- Mouth sores that prevent him from eating
- Mouth sores that won't heal
- Your child's pain medication doesn't work
- Significant weight loss in one week because mouth sores prevented him from eating.