



Nutrition Tips for Sore Mouth and Throat

- A sore mouth can increase risk of cavities and other mouth infections. Make sure you have regular dental care before, during, and after your treatment for cancer. Your health care team can help you get the dental care you need.
- Keep your mouth clean by rinsing after each meal and snack. Brush your teeth according to the directions given by your doctor or nurse. Do not skip mouth care, because this may increase your risk for more serious mouth infections.
- Eat more soft & liquid foods, such as Smoothies, Shakes, Warm Soup (cook thoroughly, but do not serve hot), thin cooked cereals like oatmeal made with plenty of water or milk, yogurt, pudding, mashed potatoes, pasta, casseroles, and canned fruit.
- If helpful, use a straw to drink liquid to bypass mouth sores.
- When eating, take small bites and chew food completely.
- Eat soft, moist foods that are cool or room temperature. Try canned fruit, yogurt or pudding.
- Soften food with milk.
- Use a blender to mash or blend fruits & vegetables.
- Add broth, sauces, gravy, or soup to soften and moisten foods.
- Use yogurt, juice, or jelly to make foods go down a sore throat easier.
- Sip warm, caffeine-free tea.
- Instead of butter or margarine, try using a little olive oil or canola oil to make foods slippery and easier to swallow.
- Try sucking on frozen fruit. Frozen grapes, wedges of cantaloupe, peach slices, and watermelon work well.
- Suck on ice chips. Do NOT chew ice - this can damage your teeth.
- Try fruit that contains a lot of water such as watermelon, peaches, and nectarines. Avoid fruit that contains little seeds, such as berries. These small seeds can be irritating to the mouth.
- If you are having trouble swallowing because of mouth dryness, ask your pharmacist about gums, saliva substitutes, mouth moisturizers and other products made especially for a dry mouth. Examples of these products include saliva stimulators such as Salagen® (pilocarpine hydrochloride); saliva replacers such as Xero-Lube®, Salivart®, Mouth Kote®, Moi-Stir®, Orex®, Salix, Optimoist®, Sage Moist Plus® spray, and Gelclair®; and mouth moisturizers such as Oral Balance® and Sage Mouth Moisturizer®.
- For thick saliva, try sipping on 100% papaya juice. Papaya contains natural substances that will help thin out your saliva. Warm liquids also work well for thinning thick saliva!



Avoid the following:

- Foods and drinks that contain caffeine such as coffee, soda, colas, and chocolate.
- Alcoholic beverages including beer, wine, and mixed drinks.
- Dry foods including tough meats, raw vegetables, breads, pretzels, rice, chips, muffins, and cakes.
- Commercial mouthwashes. These contain alcohol which will dry the mouth out and increase pain.
- Tobacco, including cigarettes, pipes, and chewing tobacco. These are very irritating to the mouth.
- Irritating or acidic foods such as tomatoes, citrus fruits & juices (orange, grapefruit, lemon, lime), and spicy or salty foods.

Honey for Mucositis during Radiation to the Head and Neck

Limited evidence shows that topical use of natural may decrease the incidence of severe mucositis, helps patients to maintain weight, and reduce treatment interruptions.

You may consider taking 1 tablespoon of honey by mouth 3 times per day:

- 1 tablespoon 15 minutes before radiation
- 1 tablespoon 15 minutes after radiation
- 1 tablespoon six hours after radiation



Allow honey to dissolve completely in your mouth, then swallow it.

Mucositis as a result of Chemotherapy

The evidence on using glutamine to manage cancer treatment side effects is strongest for mucositis. Several clinical trials show that taking glutamine may decrease the occurrence and severity of mucositis in people receiving chemotherapy that causes mouth sores and in people receiving radiation therapy to the head and neck areas. Recommended brands include—Glutasolv (online) and Dymatize (GNC). Key points on using glutamine to prevent and manage mucositis include:

- The effective dose appears to be 10 grams of glutamine powder, dissolved in water, taken three times per day.
- For best results, the glutamine and water solution should be swished around the mouth and gargled for 30 to 60 seconds before swallowing.
- For best results, glutamine should be used both as a preventive treatment before mucositis has developed, as well as after mucositis has developed, to promote healing of mouth sores.

Adapted from www.caring4cancer.com

D. Kurzrock, A. Ryan 9/2013