

Tips for Managing Mouth or Throat Sores



Things you can do on your own

- Use a toothbrush with extra soft bristles and toothpastes for sensitive gums (such as Sensodyne).
- Use a mouth swab to clean your teeth and gums.
- Avoid harsh mouthwashes that contain alcohol.
- Avoid harsh toothpastes that contain sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS).
- Rinse your mouth with saltwater or baking soda water 4 times a day for at least 30 seconds each time. (Dissolve 1 teaspoon of salt or baking soda in a cup of warm water.)
- Use lip balm to keep your lips moist.
- Eat foods that are cold, moist, bland, and soft.
- Avoid foods that are salty, spicy, hard, or crunchy.
- Drink liquids through a straw.
- Suck on zinc lozenges.



With over-the-counter medications

Ask your care team if you can take over-the-counter (OTC) medications for mouth sores.

- Try Anbesol or Orajel on your mouth sores for pain relief.
- Coat your mouth in Maalox to help your mouth sores heal.
- Take pain medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol).



With the help of your care team

Ask your care team about prescription medications, such as mouthwash solutions, that contain lidocaine.



When to call your care team for help

- If you have signs of an infection, such as white patches or a fever of 100.4°F(38°C) or higher
- If your mouth pain is so severe, you are unable to eat or drink for more than 12 hours
- If you feel dizzy or feel like you will pass out when you stand



For more information and support, visit the American Cancer Society website at cancer.org/mouth-throat-sores or call us at **1-800-227-2345**. We're here when you need us.