



Oral Care

A healthy mouth is an important part of keeping you healthy during your cancer treatment and recovery. Some cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy and radiation therapy, can cause a sore mouth. Use the following tips to keep your mouth clean and healthy:

- ◆ Gently floss your teeth and gums at least once a day after brushing. Use dental floss in an up-and-down motion.
- ◆ Rinse your mouth regularly. Avoid mouthwashes and mouth rinses that contain alcohol.
- ◆ Visit your dentist at least once a year for a thorough teeth cleaning and check-up. Be sure to see your dentist before you begin cancer treatment or if you have tooth pain.
- ◆ Avoid very sweet, sticky foods because they can cause tooth decay.
- ◆ Observe “Tips for Toothbrushing.”

Tips for People Who Wear Dentures or Dental Plates

- ◆ Remove dentures or dental plates and brush them as discussed in “Tips for Tooth Brushing.”
- ◆ Do not wear dentures or dental plates that do not fit well. Call your dentist to have them adjusted or repaired.
- ◆ Do not wear your dentures or dental plates while sleeping.
- ◆ Clean dentures and dental plates in effervescent denture cleansers (cleansers that bubble). Rinse them well before wearing.

Things that May Cause Irritation

- ◆ Mouthwashes containing alcohol
- ◆ Foods that are hard and coarse
- ◆ Foods and beverages that are spicy, acidic, or highly seasoned
- ◆ Cigarettes or pipe or chewing tobacco
- ◆ Alcoholic beverages

Tips for Tooth Brushing

- ◆ Brush your teeth within 30 minutes after eating and at bedtime.
- ◆ Use a soft toothbrush or toothette and toothpaste with fluoride.
- ◆ To soften toothbrush bristles before brushing, soak your toothbrush in warm water for a minute or two before using.
- ◆ Brush with gentle pressure.

How To Keep Your Mouth and Lips Moist

- ◆ For dry lips, use petroleum jelly, lipstick, lip balm, or cocoa butter.
- ◆ If dry mouth is a problem, try a water-based mouth moisturizer.
- ◆ Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day.

When to Contact Your Health Care Provider

- ◆ Mouth redness, soreness, or pain occurs.
- ◆ Cracks in your lips appear.
- ◆ Mouth ulcers or blisters appear.
- ◆ White patches appear in your mouth or tongue.
- ◆ Mouth, tongue, or throat feels “burned.”



Recipes Recipes Recipes

Homemade Mouth Rinse

- 1 tsp baking soda
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp salt
- 1 quart warm or cool water

Mix all ingredients together until baking soda and salt dissolve. *Do not drink the solution.* Swish in mouth, then spit it out.

Homemade Mouth Lubricant

Add $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of glycerin to 1 cup of warm or cool water. *Do not drink the solution.* Swish in mouth, then spit it out. Or put a small pat of butter or 1 teaspoon of olive oil in your mouth at bedtime to decrease the dryness in your mouth while you sleep.