



Sore or Irritated Throat

Cancer and cancer treatment can sometimes cause the throat to become very sore and make it hard to eat and swallow. Certain chemotherapy agents and radiation therapy to the head, neck, or chest area can make the inside of the throat irritated. Some people even experience heartburn and gastric reflux.

Here are some things you can do to help your throat heal and to make it feel better:

- ◆ Try eating foods that are bland, semisolid or soft, and easy to swallow. Cream soups, cheeses, mashed potatoes, yogurt, eggs, custards, puddings, cooked cereals, ice cream, casseroles, gravies, shakes, and smoothies are usually easy to eat.
- ◆ Make smoothies with soothing fruits, such as melons, bananas, peaches, and kiwi fruit. Add yogurt, frozen yogurt, milk, ice cream, or silken tofu for extra protein.
- ◆ Take your time while you eat. Chew and swallow foods carefully and allow ample time between bites.
- ◆ Choose lukewarm or cool foods that are soothing. Very cold foods or very hot foods can cause distress.
- ◆ Several small meals a day are easier to eat and digest than three large meals. Space meals around 2 to 3 hours apart to get the most comfort. Remember to stop eating 2 to 3 hours before bed and to sleep with your head elevated if gastric reflux and heartburn are problems.

What to Ask Your Doctor, Dietitian, or Nurse

- ◆ Nutritional supplements, such as liquid meal replacements, may be helpful during this time. Your doctor, nurse, or dietitian may have samples and suggestions about which supplements would be best for you.
- ◆ Talk to your doctor about medications that can numb and soothe your mouth or throat.

What to Avoid

- ◆ Tart, acidic, or salty beverages and foods can be irritating. Foods that may cause discomfort include:
 - Citrus fruit juices (grapefruit, orange, lemon, and lime)
 - Pickled and vinegary foods (relishes and pickles)
 - Tomato-based foods (chili, salsa, pasta sauces, and pizza)
 - Some broths (canned and dry packets)
- ◆ Avoid coarse or rough-textured foods, such as dry toast, granola, and raw fruits or vegetables. Blend or moisten foods that are dry and solid.
- ◆ Avoid commercial mouthwashes, alcoholic and acidic beverages, and tobacco. They can dry and irritate your mouth.
- ◆ Avoid strong spices, such as chili powder, cloves, curry, hot sauces, nutmeg, and peppers, although capsaicin taffy has been helpful for throat pain (recipe printed on “Sore Mouth” handout).

Food List

	Recommended	Foods That May Cause Distress
High-protein foods	Soft, bland meats and casseroles such as chicken rice casserole, macaroni and cheese, or tuna noodle casserole; homemade cream soups; eggnog, milk, milkshakes; silken tofu	Spicy entrees, such as spaghetti, tacos, chili; whole meats if not well tolerated
Breads, cereals, rice, and pasta	Bread, if tolerated; cooked cereals, cold cereals with milk	Crackers, hard-crust breads, salted rolls
Fruits and vegetables	Soft, nonacidic fruit and vegetables, if tolerated	Citrus fruits and raw vegetables, tomatoes, tomato-containing products
Beverages, desserts, and miscellaneous	Nonacidic juices such as apple juice and nectars; decaffeinated coffee, tea, and soft drinks; nonchocolate pudding, cake, cookies (as tolerated), pie, gelatin, ice cream, and sherbet	Citrus juices, tomato juice, caffeinated beverages, alcohol, chocolate desserts, pickles, vinegar, spices, potato chips, pretzels, popcorn, snack chips



Recipes Recipes Recipes

Potato Soup

3 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 cups chicken broth (reduced-sodium)
2 stalks celery
½ small onion, peeled
1 tbsp margarine
1 tbsp flour
2 cups milk
2 eggs, hard-cooked, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste

Cook potatoes in chicken broth with celery and onion until potatoes are tender. Blend mixture in a blender or food processor or rice in a ricer. In a heavy saucepan over low heat, melt margarine and

stir in flour to make a paste. Slowly add milk, stirring or whisking continuously until mixture is thoroughly blended and heated through. Add pureed potato mixture. Add chopped eggs that have been pushed through a sieve or riced in a ricer. Mix well and season with salt and pepper as desired. Serve hot or cold. (This soup thickens when chilled and may need to be thinned with additional chicken broth or milk.)

Makes four servings. Each serving contains 240 calories and 12 grams protein when prepared with reduced-fat milk.

Basic Sauce

2 tbsp vegetable oil or margarine
2 tbsp flour
1 cup broth, water, or milk
Nutmeg, salt, grated lemon rind, or soy sauce (optional)

Heat vegetable oil or margarine in a heavy saucepan. Stir in flour. Whisk for 1 to 2 minutes over low heat. Remove from heat. Heat and add broth, water, or

or milk. Stir briskly until smooth and return to heat. Add seasonings of choice. Bring almost to a boil. Turn heat to low and simmer until thickened. This basic sauce can be altered as desired with a variety of seasonings. It is useful for moistening foods, as well as increasing calorie and protein values.

Makes 1 cup of sauce.