

Sore Mouth or Throat

Causes:

- Tumours in the mouth or throat
- Chemotherapy
- Radiation Therapy
- Oral Surgery or procedures e.g. tooth extractions
- Dental complications e.g. abrasions from dentures

This soreness can make it hard to eat and poor food intake can lead to weight loss. This can reduce your physical wellness and quality of life. Below are some tips to help you manage these symptoms.

How to reduce the pain?

- Consider removing dentures unless necessary for chewing
- Use prescribed pain relief as guided by your health care team, such as;
 - Anaesthetic/antibacterial mouthwashes (alcohol free)
 - Medication e.g. Soluble Panadol
 - Anaesthetic/numbing agents e.g. Xylocaine Viscous

Often it is useful to take these medicines prior to eating to manage the pain – your healthcare team can guide you on when to take these medications.

Mouth cares

Follow good oral hygiene to help ease pain and keep your mouth clean

- Use a soft/children's toothbrush
- Use regular alcohol free mouthwashes e.g. salt and/or sodium bicarbonate mouthwash. Your treatment centre will be able to advise suitable products and how to use them
- Apply lip balm/moisturiser to lips
- Keep your mouth moist – try sipping extra fluids or use dry mouth products or artificial saliva spray which can be purchased from your local pharmacy

How to modify your diet?

You may need to avoid some foods and drinks **if** they sting or hurt the inside of your mouth or throat. E.g.

- Acidic drinks e.g. fruit or vegetable juices
- Alcohol
- Salty and vinegary foods
- Spices (e.g. curries)
- Extreme hot or cold food and drink
- Dry, rough, crunchy foods e.g. nuts, crisps, toast

Please turn page for further advice

- Choose soft/moist foods that are easier to chew and swallow, such as finely chopped, minced or blended meals e.g. minced meats, flaked fish, breakfast cereals soaked in milk, mashed or soft vegetables, mashed or soft fruits, dairy desserts
- Add moisture to foods e.g. sauces, gravies, margarine, cream, custard
- Soften foods by dipping in tea, coffee or soup
- Sip drinks with your meals to keep your mouth moist and “wash” food down
- Using a straw may help to avoid irritation in the mouth, however if you find using a straw makes swallowing more difficult or makes you cough, then stop using it

If you are eating less due to pain and notice you are losing weight, try adding extra nourishment to your diet:

- High protein choices: Meat, chicken, fish, eggs, dairy products, beans, lentils, nut pastes
- High energy choices: Butter, margarine, cream, avocado, oil

- Nourishing drinks: Milkshakes, smoothies or commercial supplement drinks (e.g. Sustagen, Ensure etc.)

Who can help?

Doctors - If you are having pain when chewing or swallowing, tell your medical team for advice on suitable pain relief

Dentist - Your dentist can also provide advice on pain management and artificial saliva products.

Nursing staff - Can assist with your mouth care routine

Speech Pathologist - If foods or fluids are difficult to swallow or you are coughing or choking when eating or drinking, speak to your Doctor about a Speech Pathology referral

Dietitian - If you are losing weight or finding it difficult to eat, your Dietitian can advise you on food choices or supplement drinks to suit your needs

Notes

For further information contact your Dietitian or Nutritionist: