

Nutrition and Dietetics

Diet and cancer care: sore mouth or throat

This information is part of a series of suggestions for adults to help relieve the symptoms caused by cancer or its treatment and enable you to eat.

A sore mouth or throat can make eating and drinking difficult. If you are experiencing this problem, it is important to tell a member of your health care team.

Your doctor may prescribe pain relief to be taken regularly or an anaesthetic mouth rinse to help numb discomfort. Sucking ice may also help.

- Pay particular attention to oral hygiene. Ask your nurse, doctor, or dentist for mouth care advice.
- Smoking and drinking alcohol, especially spirits, can cause irritation. Take care with mouth washes that contain alcohol. If unsure about this please speak to your nurse, doctor, or dentist.
- Cook foods until they are soft and tender. Foods can be chopped, minced, or blended with extra moisture added using sauces such as gravy, cream, full cream milk, yoghurt, crème fraiche, butter, or margarine. Your dietitian can provide you with more advice on food preparation and meal suggestions.
- Tolerance to the temperature of food and drink can vary. You may find cold foods soothing; try ice cream or iced milk shakes. If you become sensitive to very cold foods, try them at room temperature. If hot foods irritate, allow time for them to cool down before eating, but do ensure you heat food to recommended temperatures when cooking.



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- If you have sore lips, it may be less painful to use a straw to drink
- Drink plenty of fluids, aiming for at least 1½ to 2 litres (3 pints) each day. Choose nourishing drinks such as milk, milk shake and smoothies. Your doctor or dietitian may also suggest you have nutritional supplement drinks if you continue to have problems.
- If you are struggling to eat and you are losing weight, please ask your doctor or nurse to refer you to a dietitian.

The following may give you some ideas of foods to try or avoid:

Foods that can cause irritation
Coarse or hard foods such as toast, crisps, dry biscuits, or raw vegetables.
Highly spiced or salty foods such as pepper, chillies, bacon, smoked fish or curry.
Acidic or tart foods and drinks such as orange, grapefruit, lemon, tomato, pickles, olives, or vinegar.
Foods which stick in the mouth such as chocolate and pastry.

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Soft, easy to chew and swallow foods
Cauliflower or macaroni cheese
Corned beef hash
Fisherman's pie
Fish with a white/butter/cheese/herb sauce
Homemade soup or 'cream of' tinned soup
Omelette or scrambled eggs
Pasta and sauce
Risotto
Shepherds/cottage pie (with soya protein mince if vegetarian)
Well-cooked stews and casseroles
Skinless jacket potato- add butter or margarine and try toppings like gravy, tinned fish, corned beef, egg and mayonnaise, cream cheese or grated cheese
If you normally eat spicy food, try to choose a mild creamy curry or dhal and add extra yoghurt
Milk puddings such as custard, rice pudding, tapioca, sago, semolina, yoghurt, mousse, blancmange, milk jelly, ice cream, fromage frais, crème caramel, egg custard
Soft fruits such as pear, melon, stewed apple, and tinned peaches

Local dietetic department contact details:

Coventry Dietitians: 024 7696 6161

Nuneaton Dietitians: 024 7686 5098

Warwick Dietitians: 01926 495321 extension 4258

Patient Information

Further information on diet and cancer is also available from:

Macmillan Cancer Support www.macmillan.org.uk

World Cancer Research Fund www.wcrf-uk.org

This information has been produced by Coventry Macmillan Dietitians, UHCW.

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