

# Mucositis

## How to care for your mouth during chemotherapy

### What is mucositis?

Mucositis is a common side effect of chemotherapy. It happens when the treatment damages the cells inside your mouth. This can cause irritation or painful sores, and it may hurt to eat or swallow.

### Signs of mucositis

- You have pain or sores in your mouth.
- The inside of your mouth is red or swollen.
- Your throat is sore and it hurts to swallow.

### How do I care for my mouth?

Unless your provider tells you to stop, do the things on this list **each day for 30 days** after your treatment.

#### Brush your teeth

- Brush your teeth 2 times a day with your soft bristle toothbrush.
- Do not floss—this can cause your gums to bleed.
- Use a toothpaste with fluoride only. Do not use a whitening toothpaste.
- **If you have dentures or a dental device:**
  - take them out when you clean your mouth
  - wear them as usual unless your mouth hurts
  - do not wear them while you sleep.

### Use a rinse after you eat

Rinse with your baking soda and salt mixture after each meal.

#### How to use:

- Put 1 teaspoon of the mixture into a cup of water and stir.
- Gargle and swish the rinse around in your mouth for 15 seconds, then spit it out.

**NOTE: Do not use any over-the-counter mouthwashes that have alcohol or sugar, such as Scope or Listerine. We suggest you use Biotene.**

### Keep your lips moist so they won't dry out or crack

- You can use an ointment such as Aquaphor.
- Do not use lip balms or moisturizers that have petroleum.

### Other helpful tips

- Drink plenty of fluids to help keep your mouth moist and hydrated.
- Do not eat spicy or acidic foods.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns about how to take care of your mouth during treatment.