

# Sore Mouth and Throat

Cancer and cancer treatments can sometimes make your mouth and throat sore. Chewing and swallowing can become hard. It is important to continue to eat well and maintain your weight. The following tips will help you eat better while your mouth and throat are sore.

## Tips for Your Sore Mouth and Throat

- Maintain good oral care.
- Use a mouth rinse of 1 quart of water,  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon of salt, and 1 teaspoon of baking soda to keep your mouth clean. Rinse your mouth throughout the day with this mixture.
- Take any prescribed medicines for your mouth and throat as directed.
- Tilt your head back and forth to help liquids move to the back of the throat for swallowing.
- Drink through a straw to avoid sore areas in the mouth (unless otherwise directed by your health care team).
- Avoid tobacco.
- Avoid alcohol and mouthwashes that have alcohol.
- Choose soft, bland foods served cold or at room temperature. Hot foods may cause irritation.
- Soothe your mouth and throat with cold food and drinks.
- Puree or liquefy foods in a blender so they are easy to swallow.
- Moisten foods with broth, soup, sauces, gravy, or butter.
- Eat high-protein, high-calorie foods to speed healing.
- Ask a member of your health care team about high-calorie, high-protein nutritional drinks.



### QUICK TIP

Be aware that these are common oral infections that can occur during treatment:

- **Mucositis:** inflammation of the mouth
- **Esophagitis:** inflammation of the esophagus
- **Oral candidiasis, or “thrush”:** a yeast infection due to a weakened immune system

## Food Choices for a Sore Mouth and Throat

Food group	Foods to choose	Foods to avoid
<b>Protein foods</b>	Ground, chopped, or pureed tender meat, poultry, or fish Creamy peanut butter Casseroles Scrambled eggs, quiche, omelet Chicken, egg, or tuna salad Cottage cheese, yogurt Cream soups Beans and legumes like hummus, lentils, tofu, or bean soups	Tough, dry meat, poultry, or fish Chunky peanut butter Nuts Hard energy bars or protein bars
<b>Grain foods</b>	Breads, softened Cooked cereals like cream of wheat and oatmeal Dry cereal soaked in milk Pasta and rice in butter, pesto, or cream sauces Macaroni and cheese	Toast, crackers, or crusty bread or rolls Bagels, English muffins Pretzels Popcorn
<b>Fruits and vegetables</b>	Well-cooked soft vegetables Mashed potatoes Applesauce and other pureed fruits Bananas Watermelons	Crunchy fresh fruits and vegetables Oranges, grapefruits, pineapples, and other acidic fruits Pickled fruits and vegetables
<b>Desserts</b>	Gelatin Ice cream and sherbet Fruit ice, ice pops Pudding, custards	Hard cookies and cakes (unless soaked in liquid)
<b>Beverages</b>	Milk, dairy alternatives like soy milk Milkshakes, smoothies, or high-calorie, high-protein nutritional drinks Apple or pear juice	Acidic juices like orange or tomato juice
<b>Condiments</b>	Butter, vegetable oils Cream cheese, sour cream	Black pepper, spices Ketchup Horseradish

