### Tips for mouth problems



### Sore Mouth, Sore Throat

To help keep your mouth clean, rinse often with 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda and 1/8 teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of warm water. Follow with a plain water rinse. Ask your cancer care team about medicines that can help with the pain.



### **Dry Mouth**

Rinse your mouth often with water, use sugar-free gum or candy, and talk to your dentist about saliva substitutes.



#### **Infections**

Call your cancer care team right away if you see a sore, swelling, bleeding, or a sticky, white film in your mouth.



### **Eating Problems**

Your cancer care team can help by giving you medicines to numb the pain from mouth sores and showing you how to choose foods that are easy to swallow.



### **Bleeding**

If your gums bleed or hurt, avoid flossing the areas that are bleeding or sore, but keep flossing other teeth. Soften the bristles of your toothbrush in warm water.



### **Stiffness in Chewing Muscles**

Three times a day, open and close your mouth as far as you can without pain. Repeat 20 times.



### **Vomiting**

Rinse your mouth after vomiting with 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda in 1 cup of warm water.



#### **Cavities**

Brush your teeth after meals and before bedtime. Your dentist might have you put fluoride on your teeth to help prevent cavities.

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# Three Good Reasons to See a Dentist BEFORE Cancer Treatment

# 1

### Feel better

Your cancer treatment may be easier if you work with your dentist and hygienist. Make sure you have a pretreatment dental checkup.

## 2

### Save teeth and bones

A dentist will help protect your mouth, teeth, and jaw bones from damage caused by radiation and chemotherapy. Children also need special protection for their growing teeth and facial bones.

# 3

### Fight cancer

Doctors may have to delay or stop your cancer treatment because of problems in your mouth. To fight cancer best, your cancer care team should include a dentist.



### **Protect your** mouth during cancer treatment

### Brush gently, brush often

Brush your teeth—and your tongue—gently with an extra-soft toothbrush.



- If your mouth is very sore, soften the bristles in warm water.
- Brush after every meal and at bedtime.

### Floss gently do it daily

Floss once a day to remove plaque.



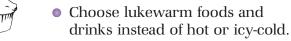
 If your gums bleed and hurt, avoid the areas that are bleeding or sore, but keep flossing your other teeth.

### **Keep your** mouth moist

- Rinse often with water.
- Don't use mouthwashes with alcohol in them.
- Use a saliva substitute to help moisten your mouth.

### Eat and drink with care

- Choose soft, easy-to-chew foods.
- Protect your mouth from spicy, sour, or crunchy foods.



Avoid alcoholic drinks.

### **Keep trying**

- Ask your cancer care team to help you stop smoking or chewing tobacco.
- People who quit smoking or chewing tobacco have fewer mouth problems.

### When should you call your cancer care team about mouth problems?



Take a moment each day to check how your mouth looks and feels.

Call your cancer care team when

- ✓ you first notice a mouth problem.
- ✓ an old problem gets worse.
- ✓ you notice any changes you're not sure about.





