

# Moving oncology care forward so that you can look forward to life's moments

*Oral mucositis  
Sores of the throat  
and / or mouth*



# Oral mucositis sores of mouth and / or throat

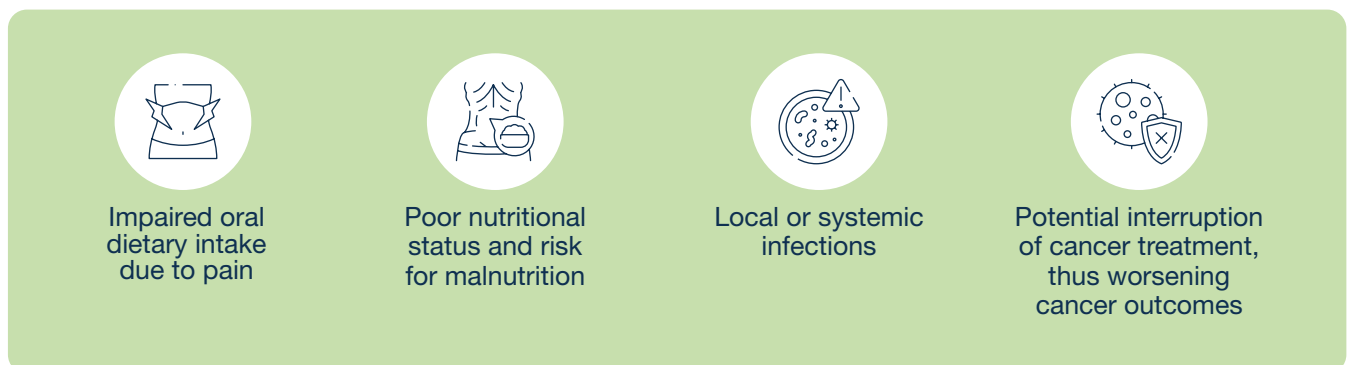
Mucositis is the inflammation of the mucus membranes that line the digestive tract and is a common side-effect of cancer treatment. Oral mucositis is the inflammation of the mucus membranes that line the mouth and throat. This condition makes it difficult to eat, drink and swallow.

## 1 Oral mucositis symptoms



- Dry mouth and lips
- Red, sore mouth
- Red, sore throat
- Open sores on the mouth, gums or tongue
- Sore, bleeding gums
- Difficulty swallowing or talking
- Increased mucus or thickened saliva

## 2 Oral mucositis complications



- Impaired oral dietary intake due to pain
- Poor nutritional status and risk for malnutrition
- Local or systemic infections
- Potential interruption of cancer treatment, thus worsening cancer outcomes

## Mouth rinse suggestions



### Mild homemade salt and baking soda solution:

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- Combined with 1 litre of water

You can also try:



Ginger ale



Alcohol-free mouth rinse







### 3 Managing oral mucositis symptoms

#### What to do

	Eat small frequent meals
	Choose food that is high in energy and protein
	Eat soft, moist foods e.g. yoghurt, ice cream, milkshakes, smoothies, jelly, custard, pudding, soups, soft fruit, and pureed meat and vegetables
	Use a blender to puree food
	Eat food that requires little to no chewing
	Add dressings, gravies, sauces, broth, milk and butter / margarine to moisten food
	Eat food that is lukewarm or cool
	Suck on crushed ice or ice lollies
	Drink plenty of fluids (6-8 glasses / day). Incorporate lukewarm or cool milk-based beverages, non-acidic juice, flat carbonated beverages, and soups into your diet
	Use a straw for drinking
	Take sips of fluids while eating to keep your mouth moist
	Tilt your head back while eating and drinking, to help get the fluids and food to the back of your mouth and make swallowing easier
	Chew gum and suck on hard candies during the day (to help keep your mouth moist)

# Oral mucositis sores of mouth and / or throat

## What to avoid

	Avoid dry, very crisp, coarse or rough foods (e.g. crackers, potato chips, dry toast, raw vegetables)
	Avoid foods that are spicy, acidic (e.g., tomatoes) and salty
	Avoid citrus, acidic, and carbonated beverages
	Avoid vinegar
	Avoid very hot food
	Avoid alcohol, caffeine and smoking

## 4 General guidelines

- Brush your teeth gently with a soft toothbrush after eating and before you go to bed. Try using an infant toothbrush.
- Soften your toothbrush's bristles before you use it, by placing it under hot running water
- Use non-abrasive toothpaste e.g. children's toothpaste and toothpaste for sensitive teeth. Avoid toothpaste with whiteners.
- Use baking soda instead of toothpaste if your gums are bleeding
- Gently floss your teeth once a day if you can
- Rinse your mouth with a mild homemade salt and baking soda solution (one litre of water combined with one teaspoon of salt and one teaspoon of baking soda). Sip, swish, and then spit the solution to rinse and clean your mouth. Do not swallow. Rinse your mouth with this solution before and after meals, and before bedtime.
- Avoid alcohol-based mouthwashes
- Use a moisturiser or balm to stop your lips from getting dry
- Clean your dentures every day
- Remove your dentures frequently during the day and at night before bed
- Do not wear your dentures if you have severe mouth sores
- Ask your healthcare provider for oral mucositis treatment

Life Oncology units have multidisciplinary teams that can support you during your journey to recovery – this includes registered dietitians (RDs).

The following are some of the areas a registered dietitian can help you in:



Assess your nutritional status and your current dietary intake



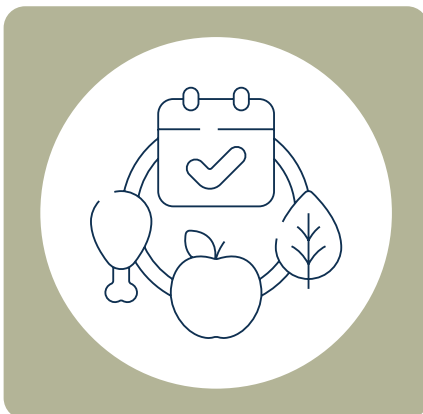
Provide you with an individualised meal plan for optimal nutrition



Recommend appropriate oral supplements to provide you with additional nutrients, including protein and energy when you are not meeting your nutritional needs through food alone



Provide you with guidelines on how to manage cancer treatment side effects that influence your dietary intake



If you need assistance with any of the above areas – ask your healthcare provider to refer you to a registered dietitian.

# References

## **CANSA**

<https://cansa.org.za/files/2021/04/Fact-Sheet-on-Nutritional-Guidelines-for-Individuals-Undergoing-Cancer-Treatment-April-2021.pdf>

## **Kidney Cancer Canada**

<https://www.kidneycancerCanada.ca/managing-side-effects/#mucositis>

## **National Healthcare Service UK**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mucositis/>

## **Mayo Clinic**

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cancer/in-depth/mouth-sores/art-20045486>

## **National Library of Medicine**

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK565848/>

## **Nutrition & Diagnosis-Related Care**

Escott-Stump, S. (2015). China: Wolters Kluwer

## **Krause's Food and the Nutrition Care Process**

Mahan, L. K., Escott-Stump, S., & Raymond, J. L. (2012). St. Louis: Elsevier Saunders

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