



Mouth Care: During Radiation Therapy

Radiation treatment to the head and neck may cause changes including:

- Thinning of lining of mouth
- Sores in mouth
- Pain in mouth and throat
- Bad taste in the mouth, dry mouth
- “Heartburn” like discomfort swallowing liquids/solids

How to help keep your mouth clean:

- Look at your mouth, tongue and gums each day or if your mouth hurts
- Tell the nurse immediately if you feel or see sores in the mouth
- Brush your teeth using soft toothbrush after every meal and at bedtime.
- Rinse your mouth with *Salt Water Mouth Rinse* after brushing your teeth.
 - Pour *Salt Water Mouth Rinse* into cup, swish and gargle a few times, and spit.
 - If your mouth has any sores, rinse every 2 hours

SALT WATER MOUTH RINSE:

Mix:

- 4 cups water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

Non-prescription products to help with mouth care during treatment:

- **Prevention Oncology Mouth Rinse** helps to maintain a balance in the mouth’s germ count (bacteria involvement).
- **Biotene** helps replace the saliva’s (spit’s) natural protection against germs.
- **Oralbalance** is a gel that helps add moisture to the mouth. It can soothe and protect dry mouth up to 8 hours.

Prescription Treatments for mouth sores or mouth irritation:

- **Viscous Xylocaine 2%**
 - Take 1 teaspoon every 2-3 hours and 5 minutes before meals.
- **Carafate Liquid (1g/10ml)**
 - To prevent/treat heartburn-like pain
- **Diflucan/Magic Mouthwash:**
 - For oral thrush.
- **Magic Mouthwash/BMX Solution:**
 - Benadryl, Maalox, Xylocaine
 - Benadryl, Maalox, Xylocaine, Tylenol#3
- **Pain Medications:**
 - As directed by your doctor.

If you are having any problems during treatment, ask the therapist to speak to your doctor!