

Mouth and Throat Soreness: Managing with Nutrition

Good nutrition is very important during cancer treatment. It helps to support healing and fight fatigue, can keep your body hydrated and helps manage weight. Mouth and throat pain can be a side effect of cancer and treatment and may affect your ability to tolerate foods and beverages. Following the tips below can help improve your overall nutrition during this time. Talk with your dietitian for further nutritional guidance.

- Choose soft, moist foods that are easy to swallow. Avoid rough-textured, acidic, tart and spicy foods that may cause irritation.
- Cut foods into small bites to reduce the amount of chewing needed.
- Puree or liquefy foods with a blender or food processor to make them easier to tolerate.
- Drink liquids through a straw to help push the food beyond painful areas.
- Avoid extremely hot foods and extremely cold foods, as they may cause discomfort. Try drinking fluids and eating foods that are at room temperature.
- Use liquid nutritional supplements, such as Boost[®], Ensure[®] and Carnation Breakfast Essentials[®] to help you maintain adequate calorie and protein intake.
- Limit caffeine and drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration and dry mouth.
- Practice good mouth care as directed by your doctor.
- Rinse your mouth with salt-soda mouth rinses. For example mix 3/4 teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon baking soda in 4 cups water. Gargle with 1 cup of the mixture 3-4 times per day or as directed by your doctor.
- Ask your doctor about prescription mouthwashes, medicine, lozenges and sprays to help relieve pain.
- Avoid smoking, chewing tobacco and drinking alcohol (including alcohol containing mouthwashes).

The chart below includes foods that may cause irritation. Avoid them if they cause you discomfort.

	Try these foods...	These foods may cause discomfort...
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk (cow, soy, almond, rice) • Juice and fruit-flavored drinks that are not acidic (apple, grape, cranberry, peach, pear and apricot nectar) • Shakes and smoothies • Try fortified beverages: Boost[®], Ensure[®], Carnation Breakfast Essentials[®], Premier Protein[®], Orgain[®] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcoholic beverages • Carbonated beverages • Acidic drinks and juices such as orange, grapefruit and pineapple juice; lemonade
Grains, Breads and Cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooked cereals (oatmeal, cream of wheat, grits, cream of rice) • Dry cereals soaked in milk • Rice with gravy • Pasta or noodle casserole • Bread, cornbread or crackers soaked in milk or soup • Pancakes or French toast with syrup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toasted bread, bagels, crackers, muffins and waffles • Hard rolls • Crackers • Popcorn and pretzels
Meats and Protein Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pureed, shredded or chopped meat with gravy • Flaked fish with sauce • Chopped eggs, tuna or minced chicken with mayonnaise • Soft-boiled, poached or scrambled eggs • Hummus, pureed beans, bean soup or lentil soup • Tofu • Creamy nut butters • Protein powders added to beverages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tough, dry pieces of meat • Fried meats • Crisp bacon • Crunchy peanut butter on bread
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit juices, such as apple, grape and cranberry • Peach, pear and apricot nectar • Canned pears, peaches and fruit cocktail • Applesauce, soft melons, banana, papaya and guava 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citrus fruits (lemon, orange, grapefruit) and pineapple • Fruit with small seeds (strawberries) • Dried fruits

Food Group	Try these foods...	These foods may cause discomfort...
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most vegetable juices • Soft-cooked vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, squash, zucchini, asparagus, turnips and green beans • Avocado • Creamed corn or spinach • Mashed white or sweet potatoes • Creamed vegetable soup or casseroles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tomato and V8[®] juice • Tomato-based soups and sauces • Raw vegetables • Pickled vegetables
Dairy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk and cream • Cottage cheese • Yogurt • Soft, grated or melted cheese • Ice cream, custard, pudding and milkshakes. • *If you are lactose intolerant try: lactose free milk, almond milk, soy milk or Fairlife[®] milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard cheese
Fats, Condiments, Misc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butter and margarine • Olive and canola oil • Milk based salad dressings such as ranch • Gravies and white sauces • Mild herbs (basil, oregano, thyme) • Popsicles and Jell-O[®] • Benecalorie[®] food enhancer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mustard and ketchup • Vinegar and vinegar based salad dressings such as Italian • Black or red pepper, chili, curry, cloves, nutmeg • Salsa • Chips, nuts and pickles

Sample Menu

Breakfast

1 cup oatmeal mixed with 1 tablespoon nut butter,
1 tablespoon honey and ½ cup whole milk

Lunch

½ cup tuna salad with mayonnaise
½ avocado
½ cup applesauce
½ cup peach nectar

Mid-Morning Snack

½ cup grape juice
1 scrambled egg

Mid-Afternoon Snack

1 cup smoothie, shake or liquid
nutrition supplement

Dinner

2 ounces shredded chicken and ½ cup rice with gravy
½ cup peas and carrots cooked with 1 teaspoon olive oil
½ cup pear nectar

Evening Snack

½ cup canned peaches
½ cup yogurt or cottage cheese

Approximate Nutritive Value of Sample Menu

Kilocalories.....	2,100
Protein.....	105 grams
Carbohydrates.....	240 grams
Fat.....	85 grams

If you have any questions about your diet, talk with your registered dietitian at the Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center.

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