



Canker Sores

Canker sores are small, round mouth sores in the lining of the mouth or on the tongue, gums, or lips. You can have one canker sore or a group of them.

Prevention

- Avoid things that irritate the mouth, such as hot drinks and sharp objects.
- Use a toothbrush with soft bristles and a toothpaste without sodium lauryl sulfate. Don't brush too hard.
- Take a daily vitamin/mineral supplement as advised by your doctor.

Signs & Symptoms

- A burning or tingling feeling before the sore appears
- Red-rimmed, shallow sores in the mouth
- Discomfort when you eat and talk

Causes, Risk Factors & Care

Canker sores may be caused by any tear in the mouth's lining, from an uneven tooth, rough tooth brushing, a burn from a hot drink, etc. Vitamin/mineral deficiencies, emotional stress, and family traits may also trigger canker sores.

Canker sores heal within 1 to 2 weeks. Self-care can help with symptoms and speed up healing. If needed, a mouthwash with tetracycline and/or an oral paste (amelxanox) can be prescribed.



Self-Care:

To Relieve Pain:

- Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt in 1 cup of warm water. Rinse the mouth with an ounce of this mixture 4 times a day. Don't swallow the water.
- Put ice on the canker sore or suck on a frozen popsicle.
- Avoid spicy foods and acidic drinks, like citrus juices.
- Use over-the-counter products, like Anbesol, Blistex, and aloe vera gel.
- Swish Mylanta or milk of magnesia around the mouth to coat the sore. Then spit the medicine out.
- Put the gel from a vitamin E capsule on the sore several times a day.
- Take an over-the-counter pain medicine. (See "Pain relievers" in "Your Home Pharmacy" at www.HealthyLearn.com.)



Canker Sores, Continued



Contact Doctor When:

- You have any of these problems with the canker sore:
 - Fever and/or swollen glands
 - Severe pain
 - A sore on the roof of the mouth or white spots in the mouth that do not heal in 1 to 2 weeks
- A canker sore disturbs your sleep or does not allow you to eat.
- A canker sore appears only after you start a new medicine.
- A canker sore has not healed after 3 weeks.