Nutrition tips to help manage difficulty swallowing and mouth sores

DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING
Cancer treatments, particularly those targeting the head and neck, can damage cells and make it difficult to swallow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHOOSE SOFT FOODS</th>
<th>AVOID FOODS THAT MAY CAUSE IRRITATION</th>
<th>CHANGE HOW YOU EAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Opt for foods like scrambled eggs, mashed vegetables, puddings, and noodles</td>
<td>• Try not to eat citrus foods or tomatoes and tomato-based products</td>
<td>• Cut foods into small pieces and eat them one at a time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eat soups and stews made with diced or pureed ingredients</td>
<td>• Don’t eat hot, spicy foods</td>
<td>• Cook foods longer until soft and tender</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use yogurt, juice, and jellies to help you swallow food</td>
<td>• Dip hard, coarse foods—like crusty bread—into milk or tea to soften them</td>
<td>• Drink through a straw if that’s easier for you</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

MOUTH SORES
Chemotherapy and radiation therapy eliminate rapidly growing cells, including the healthy cells that line the inside of the mouth. This can result in oral sores and infections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHOOSE FOODS THAT ARE SOFT OR SOOTHING</th>
<th>PREVENT AND REDUCE MOUTH DRYNESS</th>
<th>ADJUST EATING AND HYGIENE HABITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Eat soft, high-protein foods, like eggs, chicken salad, and hummus</td>
<td>• Drink more water to avoid dehydration</td>
<td>• Cook foods until soft and tender and eat them at room temperature</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Try fruits with a high water content, like watermelon and peaches</td>
<td>• Try sucking on ice pops, frozen fruit, or ice chips to help reduce dryness</td>
<td>• Rinse your mouth with salt water after each meal to help remove food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Avoid hot, spicy, and citrus foods</td>
<td>• Add broth and gravy to meals to increase fluid and calorie intake</td>
<td>• Ask your health care professional or dentist how to best care for your teeth, gums, and mouth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For additional support, visit nutritionforstrength.com
## TASTE CHANGES

Cancer treatments may affect taste receptors in the mouth and alter the sense of taste and smell. Certain cancer treatments may also cause a bitter, metallic taste.

### FIGHT UNWANTED TASTES WITH SPECIFIC FLAVORS

- Put sugar or sweeteners on foods to reduce bitterness
- Add salt or citrus to foods that taste too sugary
- Use tart flavors from citrus fruits and pickled foods to help reduce metallic taste

*Note: If you’re also experiencing mouth sores, be cautious with citrus, salt, seasonings, and sauces.*

### EXPLORE NEW FOODS AND FLAVORS

- Try salty foods, foods with strong flavors, and cold foods
- Eat bland foods if your sense of smell or taste is more sensitive
- Experiment with seasonings and marinades to see what you like

### ADJUST HOW YOU EAT

- Cleanse your mouth with tea, ginger ale, or salt water before meals and finish with a mint or gum
- Eat foods at room temperature to reduce the taste and smell
- Eat with plastic utensils if you notice a metallic taste in your mouth

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## WOUNDS AND INCISIONS

Proper healing of surgical incisions and other wounds is important, especially during treatments. Cancer treatments can make it difficult to maintain good nutrition, which may slow wound healing.

### GET ENOUGH PROTEIN, ARGinine, AND GLUTamine

- Eat protein-rich foods, like chicken, dairy products, and nutrition shakes, to help repair tissue
- Choose foods with arginine, a building block of protein that supports blood flow, like fish, chicken, and dairy products
- Eat foods with glutamine, an amino acid that stimulates collagen formation needed for healing, including eggs, beef, and milk

### EAT FOODS HIGH IN VITAMINS AND MINERALS

- Add strawberries, spinach, and other foods high in vitamin C to your diet to support healing
- Try beans, nuts, whole grains, and other foods high in zinc
- Eat avocados, trout, almonds, and other foods high in vitamin E

### STAY HYDRATED

- Drink 6-8 glasses of fluid each day to maintain hydration and support circulation
- Try broth-based soups
- Avoid caffeinated beverages

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