



Patient Education Sheet

Oncology Nursing Society
125 Enterprise Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1214
USA
+1-412-859-6100
www.ons.org



How Can I Manage Mucositis?

Mucositis is an inflammatory condition that affects the mucous membranes of people with cancer. Mucositis can cause severe discomfort and impair your ability to eat, swallow, and talk.

Here are simple tips and techniques that you can discuss with your healthcare provider to relieve mucositis.

Most Helpful

- **Oral care:** Keeping your mouth healthy is crucial for mucositis treatment. Your healthcare provider will assess your mouth for pain and other problems. Dental professionals may join your healthcare team. Basic oral care includes using a soft toothbrush that is replaced regularly; flossing at least once a day; avoiding tobacco, alcohol, and spicy foods; and keeping your lips moist with a water-based moisturizer.

Likely to Be Helpful

- **Ice:** Also called cryotherapy, treatment with ice can reduce mucositis if you are receiving certain types of chemotherapy, such as bolus 5-fluorouracil or melphalan. Your healthcare provider may ask you to hold ice or ice water in your mouth for five minutes before, during, and for 30 minutes after your chemotherapy treatment. Ice is not recommended if you are receiving oxaliplatin.
- **Palifermin:** This drug may be recommended for mucositis treatment if you are undergoing hematopoietic stem cell transplantation for hematologic malignancies. Palifermin is very expensive, so it is recommended only if you are likely to develop severe mucositis.

Not Enough Evidence

Although you may find that these techniques work for you, not enough studies have been done to show that they work to alleviate mucositis.

- Honey
- Immunoglobulin injection
- Low-level laser therapy
- Oral aloe vera
- Zinc supplementation
- Drugs
 - Allopurinol
 - Amifostine
 - Anti-inflammatory rinses

How Can I Manage
Mucositis?
Patient Education Sheet
(continued)

Oncology Nursing Society
125 Enterprise Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1214
USA
+1-412-859-6100
www.ons.org

Not Enough Evidence (*continued*)

- Antimicrobial agents
- Benzylamine hydrogen chloride
- Caphosol
- Chlorhexidine
- Fluoride chewing gum
- Flurbiprofen tooth patch
- Granulocyte–colony-stimulating factor (subcutaneous)
- Granulocyte macrophage–colony-stimulating factor (subcutaneous)
- L-alanyl-l-glutamine
- Multiagent (“magic” or “miracle”) rinses
- Pilocarpine
- Povidone-iodine (oral)
- Tetracaine

Questions for Your Healthcare Provider

Always consult your healthcare provider before adding any new treatments or other interventions into your routine.