



MOUTH OR TONGUE SORENESS

Pain and tenderness of the lips, tongue and mouth area

CAUSES

CANKER SORES

Canker sores are also called mouth ulcers. A very common condition, the sores are small, shallow, and usually painful. They can be located anywhere inside the mouth such as the lip, gum, inner cheek, tongue, palate or throat. Although the pain can hamper one's eating and talking activities, sores like these are not infectious or are hardly serious. Appearance of canker sores may be an indication of vitamins B and C deficiency. Typically, these sores heal on their own within several days to two weeks.

Symptoms:

- One small sore or a cluster of sores that are white in the center and are surrounded by a red, swollen area either on the gum, inner cheek or lip or tongue
- Pain and tenderness once sore is touched or rubbed
- A slight, stinging sensation when taking acidic liquids

DO:

- Drink plenty of water to keep mouth moist. Dryness inside the mouth can aggravate sores.
- To ease pain and ensure quick healing, try this age-old remedy: Stir a tablespoon of table salt in a glass of water and gargle several times a day.
- If the pain is too intense, sweets, cold liquids and soft foods are soothing and gratifying.
- If sores appear often, try using a toothbrush with softer bristles and replace them as soon as the brush becomes frayed.
- Seek professional help if sores are present without the pain and last for more than 10 days. Sores like these may be pre-cancerous or cancerous.

DON'T:

- Don't smoke. This irritates the protective linings inside the mouth.

COLD SORES

Starting out as ruptured blisters, cold sores are found on the lips, inside the mouth, nose or anywhere else in the face. Cold sores are sometimes called *fever blisters* and are common but extremely contagious. It is caused by the herpes simplex virus which attacks the person's nervous system and may recur throughout a person's lifetime. Exposure to extremely warm and cold temperatures, respiratory infections, exhaustion, stress and menstrual periods for women often reactivate the dormant virus and cause another round of blisters and sores.

At the stage when blisters collapse and form a large, weeping sore, the virus is highly communicable and can easily spread to other people.

Symptoms:

- One to two days before a cold sore appears, the affected area tingles.
- When a blister appears, it is often very painful and can make eating and talking difficult.
- When the blister ruptures, the contagious cold sore appears.
- After several days, the sore dries out into a scab and heals.

DO:

- Hydrate as much as possible.
- Avoid intimate contact to prevent spread of infection.
- Stay away from the sun and avoid extreme cold.
- Ease some of the pain by drinking cold drinks and eating soft foods.
- Since cold sores can appear anywhere on the face, blisters on the eye area are extremely dangerous and require medical attention.



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DON'T:

- Don't share handkerchiefs, towels or other personal effects with an infected person.
- Don't touch the cold sores. Clean hands are a must. It is very necessary to wash one's hands after handling the sores.
- Don't pick the scabs while they are healing.
- Don't smoke.

TRAUMATIC ULCER

Traumatic ulcers are sores inside the cheek or on the tongue. These sores are often caused by irritants inside the mouth such as poorly fitting dentures, broken teeth that scrape the lining of the mouth or burns from extremely hot foods or liquids.

Symptoms:

- Sore area inside the cheek or on the tongue.
- Pain discomfort and/or difficulty in eating or talking.

DO:

- Gargle with salt and water.
- Cold beverages and soft foods relieve the irritation and tenderness of the affected area.
- Have dentures or teeth checked by a dentist.

DON'T:

- Don't smoke.

ORAL THRUSH

Oral thrush is caused by the *Candida albicans* fungus, one of the microorganisms normally found inside the mouth. Taking antibiotics and oral or inhaled steroids may trigger the fungus to get out of hand and cause oral thrush. Wearing dentures is also a cause of oral thrush. Prescription medication is usually necessary for this kind of condition. Those at higher risk are newborn babies, denture users, adults with diabetes, drug users, people undergoing chemotherapy and people with poor nutrition or an immune deficiency.

Symptoms:

- Creamy, yellow, slightly raised patches on the insides of the cheek or on the tongue.
- When patches are rubbed, it will leave a painful raw area.
- Burning sensation in the mouth for adults.

DO:

- If brushing the teeth becomes impossibly painful, gargle instead with a diluted solution of three percent hydrogen peroxide.
- Use a toothbrush with softer bristles.

To relieve mouth or tongue soreness, try to gargle with salt and water. Cold beverages and soft foods can also soothe irritation and tenderness of the affected area.

