



## Head and Neck Cancer Information: Mouth Care

To help care for your mouth during and after treatment, try one or more of the following as soon as your treatments start:

- Brush and floss your teeth regularly, as tolerated. Use a very soft toothbrush.
- **Starting with Day 1 of your radiation treatment**, rinse your mouth with this Baking Soda Rinse after eating or drinking *anything* and several times during the day. Do this in addition to any other mouth care you do.
  - Baking Soda Rinse:
    - One cup water – room temperature or warm as preferred
    - One pinch (1/4 tsp.) baking soda
    - One pinch (1/8 tsp.) salt (optional)
    - Mix well. Swish in mouth after eating or drinking. Spit.
  - Or make a larger batch to use all day –
    - One quart warm water
    - 1 teaspoon baking soda
    - ½ teaspoon salt
    - Mix well. Swish in mouth after eating or drinking. Spit.
- After eating or drinking, swish with Baking Soda Solution, and then drink plain water to rinse the throat.
- If you use a mouthwash, choose one without alcohol.
- Swish plain yogurt throughout your mouth at any time during the day. Swish and spit or swallow.
- Try sipping on water or other non-sugary liquids to keep your mouth moist. Avoid sugary drinks.
- If you cannot eat solid food, drink nutrition supplements. Rinse your mouth and throat after drinking these.
- For mouth sores:
  - Avoid hard, dry, or crunchy foods that might damage your mouth or throat.
  - Avoid spicy foods, tomato products, and salty foods – these may irritate your mouth.
  - Eat and drink warm, room temperature or cool beverages and food instead of hot. Some people find cold foods and beverages soothing.
- Ask about prescription mouth rinses to help relieve pain and possibly reduce the severity of mouth sores.
- **If you have a white coating on your tongue or anywhere in your mouth, let your doctor or nurse know right away. You may need a prescription medication.**