



TREATING MOUTH PAIN AND DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING

Mouth pain and difficulty swallowing could be a sign of esophagitis, which is a swelling of the tissues that line the esophagus. The esophagus is the tube that leads from the mouth to the stomach. Patients receiving radiation therapy to the neck and chest will likely develop this side effect.

Esophagitis may start with the throat feeling dry, which often leads to soreness and pain. It may feel like a bad sore throat. The first signs usually occur during the third or fourth week after the start of radiation. If you are receiving chemotherapy along with radiation, esophagitis may occur earlier and be worse. If swallowing becomes painful enough that you cannot swallow, please let your physician or nurse know.

Tips to reduce mouth pain and difficulty swallowing

Avoid substances such as:

Coffee	Spicy foods	Citrus fruits and their juices
Alcohol	Foods hard to chew	(i.e. grapefruit, oranges, pineapples)
Tobacco	(i.e. pretzels)	Foods that are highly acidic
Foods hot in temperature		(i.e. tomatoes, tomato sauce)

You may feel like things are getting caught in your throat. If this happens, chew your food well, eat moist foods and drink fluids while eating.

Try these soft /moist/easily-swallowed foods:

Milkshakes	Pureed/mashed	Mashed Potatoes
Scrambled/Poached eggs or omelets	meats & vegetables	Meatloaf
Cottage Cheese	Macaroni and Cheese	Canned Fruit
Bananas	Custards	Pancakes
Oatmeal	Yogurt	Creamy Soups
Applesauce	Tuna/chicken/ham/egg salad	

- Mix foods with butter, gravy, sauces or sour cream to make swallowing easier.
- Cook foods until they are soft and tender.
- Cut food into small pieces.
- When soreness begins, swallow 1 to 2 Tablespoons of “Magic Mouthwash” 5 to 15 minutes before meals and when you feel you need it. This will help to decrease the soreness in your throat and help you to swallow easier.