



Mouth sores



SIGNS, SYMPTOMS & CAUSES

Canker Sores

- Small, round, red-rimmed sores with white or gray centers are in the lining of the mouth or on the tongue, gums, or lips.
- Discomfort occurs with eating and talking.
- A burning or tingling feeling can be present.

Canker sores may be caused by any tear in the mouth's lining. This can be due to an uneven tooth, rough tooth brushing, dental work, a burn from a hot drink or food, etc. A lack of vitamins and minerals, emotional stress, and having a history of canker sores can trigger them. The sores usually resolve in 4 to 14 days.

Cold Sores

- A tingling feeling is on or near the lips for 2 days before one or more sores appear.
- Small, red blisters filled with clear or pus-filled fluid rupture and weep. Scabs form.

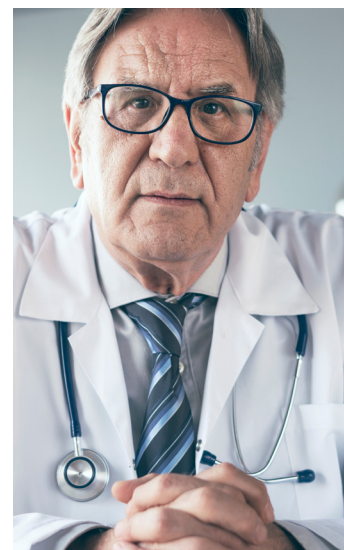
Cold sores (fever blisters) are caused by the herpes simplex virus (HSV), either HSV-1 (this is most often the cause) or HSV-2 (the usual cause of genital herpes). This virus lies dormant in the body and can return. A fever, a cold, stress, cold or windy weather, and strong sun exposure are triggers for outbreaks.

Cold sores are contagious, especially when the blisters rupture and weep.

Thrush

- The tongue looks red. The insides of the mouth have creamy white patches. A white coating can be seen inside the mouth and the throat.
- If the throat is affected, it hurts to swallow.

Thrush is caused by a fungal infection. Often it occurs after the recent use of antibiotics or corticosteroids.



ORAL CANCER WARNING SIGNS

- Red and/or white patches inside the mouth or on the lip
- A sore on the lip or in the mouth that won't heal
- A lump in the neck
- Trouble moving the jaw or mouth
- A hard time swallowing or it feels like something is caught in the throat
- Loose teeth or a hard time wearing dentures

See a doctor or dentist if you have any of these signs for 2 weeks or longer. Any of these signs may be caused by oral cancer or by other, less serious problems. Don't wait for something to hurt. Pain is not usually an early symptom of oral cancer.



TREATMENT

Canker sores heal within 2 weeks. Self-care can help with symptoms and speed up healing. If needed, a mouthwash with tetracycline or a medicated paste can be prescribed.

Cold sores are treated with self-care measures and antiviral medications, such as acyclovir and penciclovir.

Thrush is treated with prescribed, oral antifungal medicines.

Treat Canker Sores

- Mix 1 teaspoon salt in 1/2 cup of warm water. Rinse the mouth with an ounce of this mixture 4 times a day. Don't swallow the water.
- Put ice on the canker sore. Suck on a frozen popsicle.
- Avoid spicy foods and acidic drinks like citrus juices.
- Use over-the-counter products, like Anbesol, Blistex, and aloe vera gel.
- Swish Mylanta or milk of magnesia around the mouth to coat the sore. Then spit the medicine out.
- Take an over-the-counter pain medicine as directed.

Treat Cold Sores

- Apply antiviral medication, if prescribed. Or, use an over-the-counter treatment (e.g., Abreva antiviral cream, Campho-Phenique, Blistex) on the affected area at the first sign of a cold sore. You can also gently dab aloe vera or petroleum jelly on the sore.
- Apply ice to the sore. Suck on a frozen popsicle.
- Use a cotton swab to apply aloe vera, etc. to the affected area.
- Take an over-the-counter medicine for pain as directed.
- Learn ways to manage stress. Try relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing exercises and meditation.
- Avoid sour, spicy, or acidic foods. These may irritate the sores.
- Apply topical zinc oxide cream.
- Apply cool compresses when the sores have crusted over.



TRIAGE QUESTIONS



Does a child have redness or sores in the mouth that make it hard for them to eat and does the child have a fever that needs immediate care for his or her age.

NO
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YES ➔ **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**



With sores or redness with white patches in the mouth, are any of the following conditions present; HIV/AIDS, the person is on chemotherapy, recent organ transplant, diabetes, or the person has been taking corticosteroids.

NO
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YES ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



With a cold sore, do you have any of these problems: Eye pain or the eye feels irritated, severe headache, a fever and general achy feeling, blisters in the genital area, or the cold sore makes it hard to swallow, talk, or eat.

NO
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YES ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



Do you have signs and symptoms of thrush?

NO
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YES ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



Do cold sores last longer than 2 weeks, appear more than 4 times a year, or occur after starting a new medicine?

NO
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YES ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



After a mouth injury or tongue or lip piercing, are any of these signs present?

- Increasing pain, redness, swelling, or tenderness around the wound or piercing site. Swollen glands in the neck or jaw area.
- Pus drains from the wound site. Temperature of 100°F (37.8°C) or higher. Overall ill feeling.

NO
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YES ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



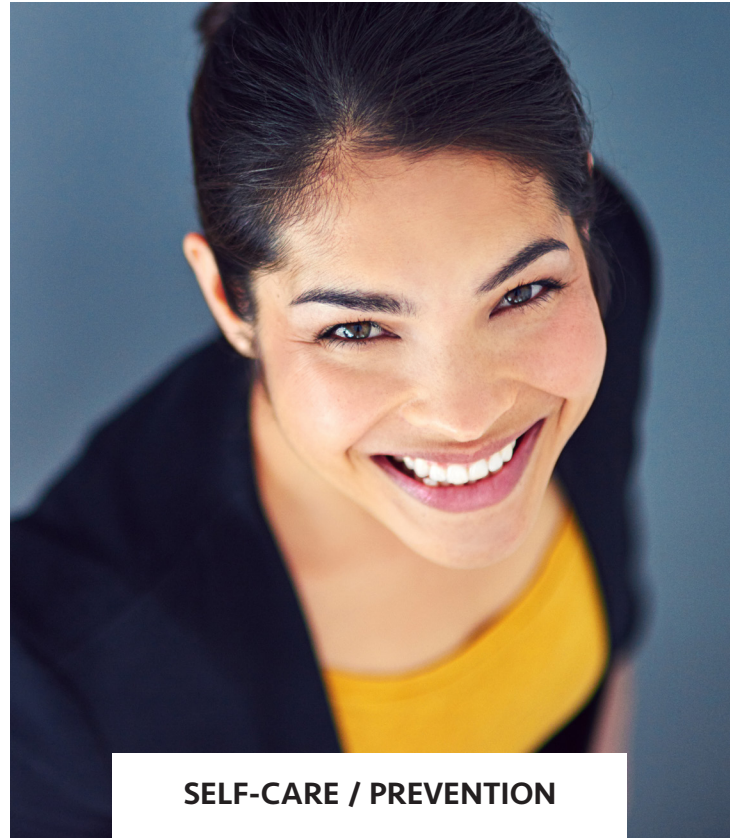
Do mouth sores not respond to prescribed treatment or self-care?

NO
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YES ➔ **CALL DOCTOR**



USE SELF-CARE



SELF-CARE / PREVENTION

Help Prevent Canker Sores

- Avoid things that injure or irritate the mouth, such as hot drinks and sharp objects. Sometimes, spicy or citrus foods can be a trigger.
- Use a toothbrush with soft bristles. Use a toothpaste without sodium lauryl sulfate. Don't brush too hard.
- Take vitamins and minerals, as advised by your doctor.

Avoid Getting or Spreading Cold Sores

- Use medicines, as prescribed by your doctor.
- Don't share drinking glasses, towels, or cooking utensils.
- Avoid direct skin contact with the sores.
- Don't touch cold sores with your fingers. If you do touch the cold sores, do not touch your eyes. This could cause a serious eye infection.
- Try to figure out and then avoid things that trigger cold sores.
- When you are in the sun, wear a hat and use a sunblock with a sun-protective factor (SPF) of 30 or more on the lips.
- Use a lip balm on cold or windy days.