Canker Sores

Canker sores are shallow, painful sores in your mouth. They are usually red or may sometimes have a white coating over them. You can get them on the inside of your lips, inside your cheeks and under your tongue. Canker sores are different from fever blisters, which usually are on the outside of your lips or the corners of your mouth. Anyone can get canker sores, but people in their teens and 20s get them more often. Canker sores may run in families, but they are not contagious. Doctors do not know what causes canker sores, but stress may be a factor.

TREATMENT

- Canker sores can be treated at home. Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver. Other medicines, such as Anbesol might keep your canker sores from becoming irritated by eating, drinking or brushing your teeth. These medications can be put on the sore.
- You can also mix equal amounts of Milk of Magnesia and Benadryl Allergy liquid. Swish a teaspoonful in your mouth for about 1 minute and then spit it out. Do this every 4 to 6 hours, for relief.
- Sucking on zinc lozenges, taking vitamin C or vitamin B complex, using a sage-and-chamomile mouthwash or taking a lysine supplement are over the counter remedies that may help.
- If your canker sores are large, last longer than a week or are so sore that you cannot eat, you should make an appointment to see your caregiver. You should make an appointment with your caregiver, too, if you also have a fever or feel sick when you have canker sores.
- You may try using anti-inflammatory (Aphthasol) or a collagenase inhibitor (Tetracycline) if problems persist. You can talk about this medicine with your caregiver to decide what is best for you.
- You may be asked to "swish and swallow" or "swish and spit" the medicine. This means that you swish the medicine around in your mouth, especially around your canker sore, for a few minutes before swallowing or spitting it out.
- If your caregiver has you use a medicine to put on the canker sore, you should dry the sore with a tissue. Next, put a small amount of medicine on a cotton swab (like a Q-Tip). Then, put the medicine on your canker sore using the cotton swab. Do not eat or drink for 30 minutes. If you do, the medicine will be washed away. Follow your caregiver's directions for medicine use.

There does not seem to be a good way to keep canker sores from forming.

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