

Mouth sores — Canker sores from food? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I always have multiple mouth sores (stomatitis?) in my mouth (sometimes four or five at a time). They are really irritating and I can't enjoy my meal. I think my diet is pretty normal, however, I usually prefer meat to vegetables. Could you tell me what are the causes of these mouth sores and how I can prevent them? Do you have any suggestion on what kind of food or medicine I should take? Thank you very much for your help.

— Sore mouth

Answer

Dear Sore mouth,

Ouch! Mouth sores can be a real pain in the... mouth. There are a number of different mouth sores — cold sores, canker sores, and sores resulting from underlying causes such as illnesses, tumors, or a reaction to medication. What you describe does sound similar to canker sores — acute, painful ulcers in the mouth that occur singly or in groups — however, the only way to know for sure is to visit a health care provider. Canker sores can be due to problems with the immune system or a number of other causes. While most canker sores eventually heal on their own, you might try some home remedies to ease the discomfort. Read on for more captivating content about canker sores!

Depending on the underlying cause, diet may have something to do with formation of mouth sores. Deficiencies of iron, vitamin B12, and folic acid have all been correlated with increased outbreaks of canker sores. So a well-balanced eating plan — including vegetables — could help reduce your discomfort. It's also possible that canker sores are caused by hormonal changes, emotional stress or anxiety, food allergies, and mechanical trauma (e.g., accidentally stabbing yourself with your toothbrush or biting your tongue or cheek), to name a few. Perhaps, with close attention, you might be able to determine what triggers the sores and do your best to avoid them.

Though canker sores usually go away on their own, you may be looking to relish in some relief. You may try some over-the-counter remedies such as rinsing the mouth out with salt water or mouthwash that doesn't contain alcohol. Other solutions include applying a mix of half water and

half hydrogen peroxide directly to the sore, followed by a dab of milk of magnesia. This process can be repeated up to four times a day. It's also good to maintain good dental hygiene by brushing your teeth twice a day and flossing every day. Finally, you may find your meals less aggravating if you avoid spicy, salty, or acidic foods.

In any case, if you find that these sores are becoming a nuisance or you're experiencing other symptoms of illness along with the sores, it's probably a good idea to visit with a health care provider. They may be able to determine what's actually going on and offer some solutions so you can enjoy future meals!

Alice!

Category:

[General Health](#) [2]

[Aches, Pains & Other Ailments](#) [3]

[Nutrition & Physical Activity](#) [4]

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[Medical Services \(Morningside\)](#) [9]

[Medical Services \(CUIMC\)](#) [10]

Published date:

Jan 01, 1994

Last reviewed on:

Jun 28, 2019

Footer menu

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- [1] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/mouth-sores-%E2%80%94-canker-sores-food-0>
- [2] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/general-health>
- [3] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/aches-pains-other-ailments>
- [4] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/nutrition-physical-activity>
- [5] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/optimal-nutrition>
- [6] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/corners-my-mouth-are-cracking-0>
- [7] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/clean-mouth-good-health-0>
- [8] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/how-floss-0>
- [9] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/medical-services-morningside>
- [10] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/medical-services-cuimc>