

ORAL MUCOSITIS & CANCER TREATMENT



Peter Mac
Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
Victoria Australia

Oral mucositis can be a side effect of cancer treatment. Understanding the condition can improve comfort and treatment outcomes.

What is oral mucositis?

Oral mucositis is inflammation with ulceration of the lining of the mouth and throat. It causes redness, swelling or sores in the soft tissues of the mouth (cheeks, tongue, throat).

It can cause significant problems with eating, drinking & speech.

Mucositis may also increase your risk of developing infections and bacterial or fungal infections in the mouth and throat.

How common is oral mucositis?

Most people receiving radiation treatment or chemotherapy for oral cancer will develop some form of oral mucositis.

How long will it last?

Generally, signs and symptoms of oral mucositis begin 3-5 days into **chemotherapy** and reaches its peak at 7-15 days.

In **radiation treatment** the degree of mucositis depends on the strength of radiation and the length of treatment. It may last 6-8 weeks.

How can I look after my mouth if I have oral mucositis?

Your dental practitioner may recommend you use a mouthwash to reduce pain or irritation.

These may include:

- Denta-Med Whole Mouth Oral Care Gel
- Biotène® Oralbalance Moisturizing Gel
- Curasept Mouth Rinse or
- MucoGard® Oral Rinse.

You can also:

- Keep a clean mouth with regular brushing using an extra soft toothbrush and by cleaning in between teeth with small brushes/floss
- Avoid spicy/dry food
- Avoid smoking & alcohol
- Leave dentures out of your mouth if they are causing you pain.



Important information

If you have any concerns about your teeth or mouth, please talk to your dental professional.

You can contact the Peter Mac Dental Oncology Department on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and from 9:00am to 5:00pm on (03) 8559 6443.

email: dentalonc@petermac.org

In the event of an emergency, please dial **000** for an ambulance or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.