

# TREATMENT

If you have small sores you can treat them at home.

- Take ibuprofen (Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain.
- Apply a thin paste of *Orabase* or *Zilactin-B*.
- Mix equal amounts of milk of magnesia and Benadryl allergy liquid. Swish a teaspoon in your mouth for about 1 minute and spit it out. Repeat this every 4-6 hours.
- Rinse your mouth with a mixture of one tablespoon of hydrogen peroxide in 8 ounces of water.
- Use Prevention Everyday Mouth Rinse 3-5 times per day for 30-60 seconds in the area of the mouth where the canker sore is located. You can also use a cotton ball, cotton Q-tip, or gauze to apply it directly to the canker sore, 3-5 times a day.



## IF SELF-TREATMENT DOESN'T HELP



When sores continue, seek help from your healthcare provider. Several prescription medicines may help with canker sores.

You may be asked to “swish and swallow” a liquid prescription medication given to you by your doctor.

- This means that you swish the medicine around in your mouth, especially around your canker sores, for a few minutes before swallowing it.

Your doctor may prescribe a medicine that you apply directly on the canker sore.

- Before applying it, dry the sore with a tissue/gauze.
- Put a small amount of the medicine on a cotton swab (Q-tip) applicator).
- Put the medicine on your canker sore using the swab.
- Do not eat or drink for 30 minutes. If you do, the medicine will be washed away.

Be sure and follow your doctor’s instructions. Use the medicine as often and as many days as your doctor has told you to use it.

Revised: August 2011

UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES  
SAINT LIAM HALL  
574-631-7497  
Available 24/7 during the Academic Year

## CANKER SORES or APTHOUS ULCERS



UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
NOTRE DAME IN 46556  
<http://uhs.nd.edu>

# Canker Sores

## What are they?

Canker Sores are shallow painful sores *in your mouth*. They are usually red.

Sometimes they have a white coating over them. You might get them on the inside of your lips, the insides of your cheeks, or under your tongue.

Canker sores are different from fever blisters, which are usually on the outside of your lips or the corners of your mouth.



## Causes of canker sores

Anyone can get canker sores, but people in their teens and 20's get them more often. Canker sores may run in families, but they aren't contagious. Doctors don't know what causes canker sores.



- More than one cause is likely even for individual patients.
- Canker sores do not appear to be caused by viruses or bacteria, although an allergy to a type of bacterium commonly found in the mouth may trigger them in some people.
- The sores may be caused by a faulty immune system that uses the body's defenses against disease to attack and destroy the normal cells of the mouth or tongue.



There is strong scientific data that suggests these painful and troublesome lesions are the results of a bacterial imbalance.

Some believe these result from:

- Digestive acids
- Stress
- Chemicals or spices in foods
- Too much sun
- Hormonal imbalances
- Trauma

Female sex hormones apparently play a role in causing canker sores. Many women have bouts only during certain phases of the menstrual cycle. Most women have improvement or remission during pregnancy.

Many believe that certain foods such as: milk, hot coffee, chocolate, cheese, vinegar, citrus fruits, whole wheat and nuts high in amino acid arginine initiate the lesions.