

## Fast Facts

### Canker Sores

- Also known as aphthous ulcers
- Small, shallow lesions that form in the soft tissues of your mouth and gums
  - Exact cause is unknown
- Several factors play a role: a minor injury to the area, emotional stress, using toothpastes/mouth rinses that have sodium lauryl sulfate, certain food sensitivities, diet low in vitamin B12/zinc/folate/iron, hormonal shift brought on by menstruation, allergic response to the bacteria in your mouth or having certain conditions, like celiac disease, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis and HIV/AIDS
- Not related to cold sores because they aren't caused by the herpes virus
  - Aren't contagious
- More common in teenagers/young adults, women and those with a family history of them
- Three types: minor (most common), major and herpetiform

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<p><i>Minor:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Small, round/oval shaped</li> <li>-White/yellow center with a red border</li> <li>-Painful</li> <li>-Make it uncomfortable to eat or talk</li> <li>-Heal within 1-2 weeks</li> <li>-Don't usually leave a scar</li> </ul> <p><i>Major:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Larger and deeper</li> <li>-Irregularly shaped edges</li> <li>-Extremely painful</li> <li>-Take up to 6 weeks to heal</li> <li>-Can cause a significant amount of scarring</li> </ul> <p><i>Herpetiform:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pinpoint in size</li> <li>-Form in clusters that can combine into a single large ulcer</li> <li>-Edges are usually irregular</li> <li>-Heal in about 1-2 weeks</li> <li>-No scarring</li> <li>-Form more often later in life</li> </ul>	<p><i>Minor &amp; Herpetiform:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Over-the-counter pastes, creams, gels and liquids for pain relief</li> <li>-Rinse your mouth with a salt water or baking soda rinse (dissolve 1 teaspoon of either into ½ cup of warm water)</li> <li>-Suck on ice chips and let them melt over the sores can help to reduce the pain</li> <li>-Avoid foods that can cause further irritation (acidic, spicy or have sharp edges)</li> <li>-Be careful when brushing</li> <li>-Get toothpaste that doesn't foam</li> <li>-Avoid mouth rinses that contain alcohol</li> <li>-Put a small amount of milk of magnesia on the sore several times a day</li> </ul> <p><i>Major:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Prescription strength topical products, mouth rinses or pills</li> <li>-Determine cause by doing tests to see if you're nutrient deficient or have any other health problems</li> <li>-Cauterize (burn) the tissue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good oral hygiene by regularly brushing and flossing</li> <li>-Use a soft brush</li> <li>-Avoid toothpastes that contain sodium lauryl sulfate if you have a sensitivity to them</li> <li>-Reduce stress</li> <li>-Keep track of if you experience canker sores after you eat certain foods</li> <li>-Make sure you are getting enough fruits, vegetables and whole grains to avoid any nutritional deficiencies</li> <li>-If you have any dental appliances that are causing sores, talk to your dentist about options to decrease the level of irritation</li> </ul>

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