

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

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