



Integrative Therapies Program for  
Children with Cancer  
Herbert Irving Cancer Center, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor

Created by: Elena Ladas, MS, RD  
Debbie Kennedy, PhD(c), CNS  
Kara Kelly, MD

## Coping with Mouth Sores/Sore Mouth

### General Guidelines that help:

- Cut foods into small pieces
- Use straws for drinking/eating
- Serve foods cold or at room temperature
- Serve soft, pureed, tender foods
- Mix foods with sauces, gravies, butter
- Rinse mouth out with water throughout the day to remove food and germs
- Avoid the following foods: citrus fruits, any dry and/or coarse foods, spicy and salty, hot drinks, any alcohol containing substance (mouthwashes), caffeine
- High protein/calorie foods may speed healing

### Foods that may help:

- Ice cream, milkshakes, yogurt
- Fruits: bananas, applesauce, peaches, melons, apple juice
- Cottage cheese and other creamy cheese products
- Custards, puddings, gelatin, jello
- Cream of wheat, Farina, oatmeal
- Mashed potatoes
- Macaroni & cheese
- Pureed bean dishes
- Pasta mixed in sauces
- Creamy soups (for calorie content and pain soothing, serve at room temperature)
- Use soothing seasonings such as, basil, parsley, bay leaves, rosemary, and oregano

### Herbs/Complementary Therapies that may help:

*\*The use of herbs is not recommended. The information is provided because many have inquired about these particular agents. Although, the following herbs have not been found to be harmful in small studies, there is still limited information available about their use in children in conjunction with chemotherapy. It is imperative that the use of herbs be discussed with your child's physician before proceeding with any of these therapies.*

- L-glutamine in liquid form. Clinical trials have been completed in children undergoing bone marrow transplants. The dosage used was 2g/kg two times per day.\*
- Drink chamomile tea throughout the day
- Myrrh used as a mouthwash. 10 drops in 1 cup of warm water.
- Aloe Vera gel. The taste may be unpleasant if your child is experiencing nausea.
- Capsaicin (although a spicy herb) has been found to alleviate pain from mouth sores. It has been administered in a taffy form (great for kids!) and has been shown to significantly alleviate mouth pain. The recipe is as follows: 1 cup sugar,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of light corn syrup,  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup water, 1 tbsp cornstarch, 2 tbsp butter/margarine, 1 tsp salt, 2 tsp vanilla,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp cayenne pepper. Combine all ingredients except vanilla and cayenne pepper and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly to hard ball stage or 256F. Remove from heat, stir in vanilla and cayenne pepper. When cooled, pull taffy. When taffy stiffens, cut/pull into candy strips or pieces. (Recipe from *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*. 10 (3); 245. 1995.

\* Anderson, *et al.* *Cancer*. 83 (7): 1433-1439. 1998.