



Mouth Ulcers

Dimock Community Health Center



What are mouth ulcers?

Mouth ulcers are sores or open areas on the gums, tongue, lips, or in the cheeks. Some sores may become swollen, red, and even bleed a little. Most ulcers are painful.

What causes mouth ulcers?

Medicines or infections including HIV, can sometimes cause mouth ulcers. Sometimes there is no known cause.

What should I do if I get mouth ulcers?

Mouth ulcers usually heal by themselves within a couple days. You should call your health care provider if you get any mouth sores that last more than 2-3 days. The provider may also give you some mouthwash or other medications to make your mouth more comfortable and to help in to heal. The provider may change your medications to see if the medicine is the cause.

You can use baking soda as a mouth rinse by mixing one tablespoon of baking soda in a glass of water. Swish the mixture in your mouth and then spit it out. This will help clean the mouth out without causing pain. You should avoid bottled mouthwashes while you have an ulcer because they may cause pain.

While you have mouth sores, you may find that it is more comfortable to avoid acidic food (such as lemons and tomatoes) and spicy foods. Sipping warm tea or eating chilled foods (popsicles, frozen yogurt, and sherbet) may make your mouth feel better.

How can I avoid mouth ulcers?

Often mouth ulcers are not avoidable.

When should I call my provider?

Call your health care provider whenever you have a sore in your mouth that does not get better in 2-3 days. Call your provider sooner if the ulcer makes it difficult to swallow, or is so bad that you are not eating and drinking your usual amounts.