MOUTH CARE

Chemotherapy drugs can cause dryness and irritation of the mouth, gums and throat, which may cause the area to bleed. Sores in the mouth and throat are called stomatitis or mucositis, which can cause pain and become infected.

Tips to keep the mouth, gums, and throat healthy:

- See a dentist before starting chemotherapy to have teeth cleaned and any problems, such as cavities, gum disease, abscesses, or poor-fitting dentures taken care of, and make sure your dentist is aware of you starting chemotherapy.
- Brush teeth and gums after every meal, using a soft toothbrush or gentle touch. Avoid using mouthwashes that contain alcohol. Your doctor may have suggestions for a mild or medicated mouthwash.
- Rinse mouth with warm salt water after meals and before bedtime.

Mouth Rinse Recipe

- ½ teaspoon of salt
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda (optional)
- Mix in one glass of warm water
- Swish/gargle 4-5 times a day
- Mix a fresh solution each rinse to avoid breeding germs

If mouth sores are painful or prevent you from eating, you may try these ideas:

- Ask your doctor or nurse about medications that may ease the pain.
- Eat food cold or at room temperature to avoid irritation caused by hot foods
- Eat soft, soothing foods, such as milkshakes, ice cream, mashed potatoes, etc.
- Avoid irritating acidic foods and juices, as well as spicy or salty foods.
- Most important, drink plenty of fluids throughout the day.