

# Canker Sores (Aphthous Ulcers)

One of the most painful, frequently occurring conditions that plague patients is canker sores on the cheeks, lips, tongue, gums, or palate. They can even occur outside of, but close to, the mouth. Fortunately, whether you treat them or not, canker sores usually disappear in about one week or a little longer. The cause of these objectionable sores is unknown, but fatigue, some foods, irritation with a sharp object or toothbrush, emotional distress, or other reasons are potential causes. What can you do about canker sores?

- Avoid irritating or abrading the soft tissues of the mouth.
- When a canker sore is present, don't irritate it, brush it, or eat hot, spicy foods.
- Pharmacies have many drying, numbing, or protective ointments that can relieve the discomfort. Ask your dentist for a product recommendation.
- Temporary relief can be obtained by sucking on an ice cube.
- If there are multiple canker sores present, your dentist may prescribe corticosteroids to assist in controlling the problem.