

MOUTH SORES

Oral lesions can make it painful to eat and talk. They can be embarrassing and difficult to control. The most common types of mouth sores include "fever blisters" (also known as cold sores) and canker sores.

Fever blisters:

- ◆ Fluid filled blisters which generally occur on the lip but can occur on the gums and roof of the mouth.
- ◆ Fever blisters are generally painful; the pain may precede the actual eruption of the blister.
- ◆ Fever blisters generally last 7-10 days and can rupture and subsequently crust over.
- ◆ Fever blisters are caused by the herpes simplex virus; because this virus has an active and latent (dormant) phase, fever blisters tend to recur.
- ◆ Fever blisters tend to recur in the same location and are induced by stress, fever, trauma, hormonal changes and exposure to sunlight.
- ◆ Fever blisters are contagious and are most contagious when they rupture. The virus can spread to the eyes and genitalia as well as other individuals.
- ◆ Treatment of fever blisters includes coating the blister with a protective coating containing an antiviral medications.
- ◆ There is no "cure" for the blisters as the virus will recede and remain dormant in the tissue until the next stress.

Canker sores (Aphthous ulcers):

- ◆ Generally noted to be small red or white shallow ulcers on the tongue, soft palate or inside the lips and cheeks.
- ◆ Canker sores are generally painful and last 5-10 days.
- ◆ Over 80% of the U.S. population has had a canker sore at one point in their life.
- ◆ Women get canker sores more frequently than men.
- ◆ Canker sores are generally caused by a local immune response to stress, trauma or irritation.
- ◆ Certain foods such as tomatoes, citrus fruits and nuts can cause canker sores.
- ◆ Canker sores are NOT contagious.
- ◆ Canker sores are generally treated with topical steroid creams, not antibiotics or antivirals.

Avoiding mouth sores:

- ◆ Stop smoking
- ◆ Reduce stress
- ◆ Avoid injury to mouth/gums caused by hard foods, braces and dentures
- ◆ Chew slowly
- ◆ Practice good dental hygiene and visit your dentist.
- ◆ Insure proper diet with appropriate vitamin supplements.

As always, call if there are any questions: (909) 466-8400