

Difficulty Chewing or Swallowing

Here are some things to try that may make it easier for you to chew and swallow:

- Choose soft, nutritious foods like soups, cottage cheese, cheesy noodle dishes, mashed potatoes, refried beans, yogurt, eggs, milkshakes, custards, flan, ice cream, and pudding.
- Try soft fruits like ripe bananas or applesauce or fruit nectars added to a creamy cereal like oatmeal, cream of wheat, cream of rice, grits, or malt-o-meal.
- Put your favorite chunky soup or stew in the blender and blend until smooth.
- Make a fruit smoothie in the blender with frozen, canned or soft fresh fruit plus milk, soy milk, yogurt or ice cream. Flavor with vanilla or maple syrup or add some creamy peanut butter, nonfat dry milk or protein powder for extra protein.
- Soften some of your favorite foods by stewing, simmering, or dunking them in a liquid.
- Add cream sauces, gravy, sour cream and butter for “lubrication.”
- Keep your mouth lubricated by sipping liquids with your food.

Sore Mouth

Here are some things that may help if your mouth is sore:

- Try using a straw or drinking food from a cup so you can direct it more easily to the back of your mouth to be swallowed.
- Changing the tilt of your head (either back or forward) when you swallow may direct foods away from sore spots.
- Choose bland and low acid foods. Avoid those that can cause irritation like citrus fruits and juices, salty foods and spices like chili, nutmeg, or pepper.
- Try serving foods cold or at room temperature if hot foods are painful.
- Avoid alcohol and carbonated beverages.
- Try anesthetic lozenges or sprays to numb your mouth and throat long enough for you to eat.
- Avoid commercial mouthwashes that contain alcohol (most do) as they can dry and irritate the tissues in your mouth.
- Make your own soothing mouthwash with one teaspoon of baking soda in one cup of warm water.
- Ask your doctor or dentist about artificial saliva or other products to coat and protect your mouth and throat.
- Get regular dental care. Your dentist may have other suggestions if your teeth and gums are sore.
- Avoid smoking.