



Medicines for Patients with Radiation to the Head and Neck

Carafate (Sucralfate)

This medicine helps protect your *mucosa* (lining of the mouth and throat).

Dose

1 gm/10cc (2 tsp) liquid 4 times a day

How to Take It

- You can take Carafate on an empty or full stomach.
- After meals and at bedtime, do mouth care and then use Carafate. Swish it in your mouth for 15 to 30 seconds and then swallow. Use Carafate after you are done brushing and rinsing to allow it to coat the mucosa. If it sticks to your teeth, you can gently clean your teeth with a damp toothbrush or sponge.

Salagen (Pilocarpine)

This medicine stimulates your salivary glands so that they keep producing saliva.

Dose

5 mg, 1 tablet 3 times a day

How to Take It

- Take 1 tablet 1 hour before your radiation treatment. Take 1 tablet at bedtime. Take the 3rd tablet when you most need it.
- Even with this medicine, your mouth may still feel drier than normal. If you are having problems, tell your doctor or nurse. You may need to increase your dose of Salagen.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Ask your nurse or doctor if you have questions or concerns.

UWMC Cancer Center/
Radiation Oncology:
Weekdays from 8 a.m. to
6 p.m., call 206-598-4000
and press 1.

After hours and on
holidays and weekends,
call 206-598-6190 and
ask for the Radiation
Oncology resident on-call
to be paged.

Fluoride Trays

If your dentist prescribes fluoride treatment, use your fluoride trays the last thing at night before you go to bed:

- Do your mouth care and rinse the Carafate off your teeth with a wet toothbrush.
- Apply fluoride gel evenly to the trays.
- Put the trays in your mouth so that the gel covers your teeth. Leave the trays in place for 5 minutes.
- Remove the trays. Do **not** rinse your mouth.
- Brush the trays with a toothbrush and toothpaste. Rinse the trays and dry them well.

If fluoride treatments become uncomfortable during treatment while your mouth is sore, stop for a few days and then try starting again.

Mouth Care

- Mouth care during radiation treatment is very important. It helps lessen side effects from radiation and helps prevent infection.
- Do your mouth care 4 times every day – after each meal and at bedtime.
- Brush with a soft toothbrush or electric/sonic toothbrush. You may want to use a Water Pik for hard to reach areas.
- If your mouth becomes sore, you may want to change to a soft baby toothbrush or sponge toothettes.
- If your mouth is dry, try brushing with Biotene toothpaste.
- Floss once a day, unless your mouth is too sore. If flossing irritates your mouth or your mouth is too sore, you may stop flossing until your gums have healed.
- After you brush, rinse with salt and baking soda mixed in water. To make this solution, mix ½ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon baking soda in 2 cups of warm water. Use this rinse as often as you wish during the day to clean and moisten your mouth.

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