

## **Aphthous Ulcers**

### **What are aphthous ulcers?**

Aphthous ulcers, also called canker sores, are painful oral lesions that appear as localized, shallow, round to oval ulcers with a grayish base.

Aphthous ulcers can happen in kids and adults of any age. Aphthous ulcers may occur on the gums, tongue, lips, palate, and cheeks. Susceptibility appears to be familial.

Can be recurrent. Not unusual for children to have multiple rounds of canker sores a year. 30% of children affected have recurrent sores for years after first outbreak.

### **What increases the risk of aphthous ulcers?**

- Diet low in folic acid, vitamin B12, and iron.
- Can occur after biting the tongue or the inside of the cheek.
- Firm bristle toothbrushes or aggressive brushing.
- Reaction to certain foods such as coffee, chocolate, cheese, nuts, and citrus fruits.
- Stress
- Viruses
- Medications
- Mouth rinses or toothpastes with sodium lauryl sulfate.

### **Prevention:**

- Avoid foods that cause allergies or irritate the mouth.
- Use soft-bristle toothbrushes, and rinse with mouthwashes that don't contain sodium lauryl sulfate.
- Avoid any foods that seem to trigger a breakout
- Avoid spicy, salty, and acidic foods (such as lemons and tomatoes), which can irritate tender mouth sores.

### **Treatment:**

To treat aphthous ulcers, you can try:

- Applying a baking soda paste to the canker sore after each meal. (1 tbsp baking soda mixed with 1 tbsp water and apply to sore)
- Using a cotton-tipped applicator to apply benzocaine (such as orajel) for temporary relief (not for <2 years of age)
- Using a swish-and-spit mouth rinse with diphenhydramine/lidocaine/maalox to provide pain relief
- Ibuprofen or Tylenol for pain