

TIPS FOR MANAGING THICK SALIVA OR MUCOUS

What causes thick saliva?

- Radiation therapy to the head and neck area may reduce the amount and increase the thickness of saliva.
- Dehydration (*low fluid intake*) can also increase the thickness of saliva
- Many drugs such those used to control pain and nausea can cause dry mouth causing thick saliva or mucous

These tips may be helpful if you have thick saliva or mucous. They are designed to increase moisture, thin saliva and mucous making eating and drinking easier.

What can you do to manage thick saliva?

- **Eat soft, moist foods.** Limit hard or dry foods such as tough meats and crackers. Try adding extra moisture to foods with sauces, gravies and butter.
- **Limit thick or viscous foods** such as honey, syrups and peanut butter. Try thinning thicker foods such as soups by adding extra broth or milk.
- **Eat often.** Have small meals and snacks throughout the day. Try taking sips of fluid between bites of food.
- **Drink enough fluids daily.** Drink at least 8 to 10 cups of fluid to help prevent dehydration and help thin saliva.
- **Drink warm fluids** to help clear your mouth of thick saliva and to help 'wash' food down.
- **Rinse your mouth and gargle** with club soda or baking soda rinse (1/4 tsp baking soda mixed with 1 cup water) before and after eating.
- **Limit caffeine, alcohol and spicy foods.**



Adapted from: (1) "Coping with Thick Saliva or Muscous"
CancerCare Manitoba

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Do you have more mucous after having milk products?

These tips may help reduce mucous when eating or drinking milk products:

- Try using lower fat milk products (skim or 1% milk)
- Try using cooked milk products (custards or puddings)
- Try soy-based products instead of milk products
- Drink clear fluids after having milk or soy-based products



Helpful Hints:

These foods and fluids may help increase the amount and decrease the thickness of saliva:

- Try sour/tart foods and fluids
 - Iced tea
 - Sport drinks
 - Lemon or lime drinks
 - Citrus drop candies
- Try carbonated fluids
 - Soda water
- Try sucking on plain ice chips

*You may not tolerate some of these foods and fluids if your mouth or throat is sore.



Other Suggestions: _____

Date: _____

Registered Dietitian: _____

Phone: _____