

# Aphthous Ulcers aka Canker Sores

Aphthous ulcers, commonly known as canker sores, are white or yellow inflamed spots that can appear temporarily on your tongue, gums, or inside your cheeks.

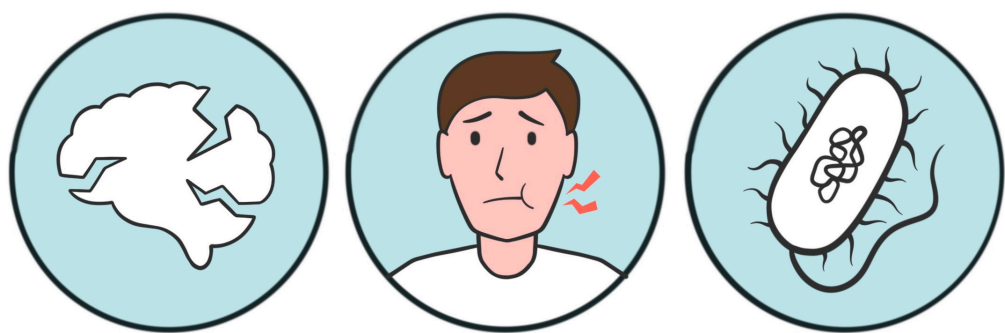
Anyone can get a canker sore, and although they can be painful, they are not contagious and typically heal on their own within a few weeks. If a canker sore does not go away on its own, you should go see your dentist.

Experts are still trying to understand why some people get canker sores more often than others, but there are still ways to help prevent and treat canker sores.



## What Can Cause Canker Sores?

- Acidic foods
- Injuries to the tongue, gums, or cheek
- Ibuprofen and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs
- H. pylori bacteria (also a common cause of stomach ulcers)
- Allergic reactions to food, toothpastes, or other oral hygiene products



## How to Prevent Canker Sores?

- Limit or avoid acidic foods and drinks such as spicy foods, sour candies, and sodas
- Brush and floss regularly
- Ask your dentist about nutrient deficiencies
- If you have braces, dentures, or other dental devices that are rubbing, poking, or irritating your mouth in anyway, ask your dentist for help



## How Can You Treat Canker Sores?

- Use a topical oral gel like benzocaine
- Use a non-alcoholic mouthwash or ask your dentist about a prescribed medicated mouthwash
- Take vitamins to reduce nutritional deficiencies
- Ask your dentist about cauterization with chemicals or by laser for severe cases