

## **Gargle, Gargling, to cure & eliminate pain from sore throats & mouth sores**

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I wrote these instructions for gargling because I could not find a satisfactory method on the internet. The purpose of gargling is to reduce the pain from sores as quickly as possible and to accelerate the healing process;

**here, “sores” includes sore throats and any painful mouth sores.**

There are pathological cases of sores that can not be treated this way, but we are talking about mouth infections and common sore throats from colds. We need to know, biologically, what is causing sores and what the gargle does to cure them, in order to come up with the best procedure. I am not medically trained, but have a Ph. D. in physics and have taken college courses in biology and chemistry which helped me to conduct my research into gargling.

Numbing agents such as Ambesol work temporarily but is impossible to apply for sore throats and does not help the healing process.

Done correctly, the pain can be eliminated in less than an hour but, gargling incorrectly (almost all the methods described on the internet!), doesn't work and the soreness can last for over a week; at times, incorrect gargling can do more harm than good as explained below. Intense pain can cause depression and sleep deprivation, and the resulting stress can weaken the immune system and incapacitate you from performing your daily work.

The simplest method is to use salt water, although most commercial mouthwashes should work except overly strong solutions such as Listerine, which I have found to actually increase the pain when used as described here. Because this method recommends gargling frequently in order to reduce the pain quickly (every few minutes), strong solutions (even salt) can irritate the throat or even cause damage. The optimum salt solution is about a quarter saturated salt solution. Fill any glass 1/4 way with water. Add salt while stirring. Stop when you see salt on the bottom that will not dissolve; you now have a quarter cup of saturated solution. Pour most of this solution, being careful not to pour the salt at the bottom, into another cup of the same size, and add water to fill this second cup – you now have a quarter-saturated solution. Warm water will help a bit, but is not essential; avoid ice cold water because I have not experimented with it, and the low temperature might interfere with the gargling process.

One doctor recommended adding a few drops of hydrogen peroxide to a mouthful of water for gargling; this may be effective because hydrogen peroxide is especially effective at killing viruses. However, you can not prepare a large glass of peroxide solution and use it over a period of time, as you can with salt, because the peroxide is quickly lost from the solution – you need to prepare a fresh mouthful for each gargle. You can even add peroxide to the salt solution.

Take a sip of this water and, for sore throat, gargle by facing the ceiling and blowing small amounts of air into your mouth to agitate the solution. Open your mouth, lip the lips over the teeth and in towards the mouth, making you look like a toothless old man. This opens the throat to let the solution reach as

far as possible into the throat; do not drink the solution. Sticking your tongue out works also, but when I do that, I risk drinking the solution accidentally. For other mouth sores, simply swish the solution in the mouth, making sure to hit the sore spot. You only need to gargle for 5 to 15 seconds. Swish the solution around the entire mouth to clean out all the virus/bacteria/etc. in the mouth, not just the throat or the sore spot, because there are more pathogens all over the mouth than at the infection site. Spit out the solution and immediately gargle again with plain water to remove all the salt in the entire mouth. Salt is quickly absorbed in your mouth; you don't need to swallow it in order for salt to be absorbed into the blood stream; this is why it is important to rinse the salt out. Because you need to repeat this every few minutes, it is important to rinse the salt water out; otherwise, you will ingest too much salt and raise the blood pressure. Note that salt water gargle methods on the internet do not instruct you to rinse the salt out, resulting in high salt intake not only by absorption within the mouth, but also because you will eventually swallow all the salt that is not absorbed.

In less than an hour of this repeated gargling, the pain should be mostly gone, and you can stop gargling. The pain can return some time later (in about 10 minutes for established sores), in which case you must repeat the procedure if you need to suppress the pain. After that, gargle whenever you can, since more gargling will accelerate the healing process.

This gargling procedure is designed to flush the pathogens out, not to kill them, because it is impossible to kill them without damaging the good tissues. The salt solution causes the pathogens to detach from the mouth so you can rinse them out; thus, there is no need to gargle for minutes. You need to repeat gargling because each gargle removes only part of the pathogens and those remaining in the mouth can multiply in a matter of minutes. "Conventional" gargling methods do not recommend immediate rinsing with water probably because of the belief that longer exposure to salt will kill more pathogens, but this belief is incorrect and only results in ingesting lots of salt, especially if you gargle for minutes.

Using strong solutions that can damage the exposed cells at the sore, or not rinsing out the salt after gargling can do more harm than good. A saturated salt solution can increase the pain. Gargling with solutions that are too strong can damage the beneficial cells and prevent the immune reaction from functioning at the sore. By reducing the stress from pain and lack of sleep, proper gargling can help the immune system function better.

Often, my mouth and lips "peel" when I catch a cold, especially if I run a fever. This is most noticeable in the morning when brushing my teeth. Some people worry why all of a sudden, the mouth skin is peeling and blame it on the use of "bad" toothpaste, but this is an unnecessary worry because nothing is peeling. The mouth is simply replacing the mucous film that is always present in the mouth, which became loaded with pathogens during the night. Perhaps the astringent agent in toothpaste facilitates this replacement. Knowledge about this mucous layer is relevant to gargling because the pathogens get trapped in the mucous and are difficult to rinse out, which explains why it is necessary to rinse so frequently.