



# Healthy People Dental

## DEALING WITH WINTER MOUTH WOES

When it's cold outside, exposed skin isn't the only part of your body that can suffer from a drier climate. While you're spending the winter playing in the snow, enjoying the company of extended family, and even hiding from a blizzard, some of your favorite activities could wreak havoc on your mouth and lips. Feel free to enjoy winter in as many ways as you can, but being aware of some winter tips for a healthy mouth can ensure that your mouth stays clean into the spring. Watch out for these common cold weather complaints:

### CHAPPED LIPS

Ask anyone who just spent a day on the slopes, and they'll say chapped lips isn't the post-ski ritual they planned. But exposure to wind, cold, and sun creates the perfect environment for dry lips. And you don't need to be a skier, either. Simple exposure to the elements can damage the delicate skin on your lips, so keep them protected. Wear a daily lip balm that contains at least SPF 15 and apply it often. You can also stave off chapped lips by drinking plenty of water to hydrate your skin, and installing a humidifier in your home to add a little extra moisture when you sleep. If you already have chapped lips, keep them super hydrated so they heal faster. Petroleum jelly is a great and inexpensive way to lock in moisture.



## MOISTURE MATTERS

### CANKER SORES

If you notice that you have more canker sores than usual, it might be the result of too many winter treats. Foods high in acid can be a recipe for canker sores, so if you've been sipping on cider or munching on spicy treats during the holidays, canker sores can actually set in and ruin your fun. Of course, completely avoiding acidic and spicy foods can help prevent canker sores, but if you're already suffering, try swishing a mixture of one teaspoon of salt and a half-cup of water to help clean the sores for faster healing. Alcohol-free solutions can also be used to relieve pain and speed the healing process without irritating sensitive mouths.

### COLD SORES

Exposure to the harsh winter sun can also cause cold sore breakouts. Spending time

outside during the winter can definitely make cold sores worse. When battling cold sores, the best winter tips are to ensure that the skin around your mouth is protected. Continue to use products with SPF of 15 or higher. Try to keep your hands clean as well, in order to avoid the spread of viral bacteria. Stress is also a common cause of oral breakouts. Keeping your stress level down – with work breaks and sufficient nights of sleep – can help to reduce these blemishes over time.

### SENSITIVITY

That surge of pain you feel when biting into cold foods might seem to be ever-present during the cold winter months. Cold temperatures and wind could leave your teeth feeling sore, even when you take measures to avoid foods that have these abrasive qualities. Most people can't avoid

cold weather altogether, so brushing with a desensitizing toothpaste, can keep this irritation suppressed all winter long. Sensitive toothpastes use ingredients that protect the teeth from sensitivity to extreme temperatures so you can enjoy the coldest beverages and seasons without worrying about tender enamel.

Winter should be about celebrating with family, taking advantage of winter sports, and enjoying the opportunity to keep warm by the fire – not worrying about oral health. By knowing which mouth woes are most likely to affect you during the colder weather, you can prevent them from derailing your good time.

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Source: [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)