



**James A. McNamara, DDS, PhD**  
**Laurie McNamara McClatchey, DDS, MS**  
**Donald R. Burkhardt, DDS, MS**  
**Patrick J. Nolan, DDS, MS**  
Specialists in Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics  
321 N. Ingalls Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 (734) 668-8288  
[www.mcnamaraortho.com](http://www.mcnamaraortho.com)

## **CARE OF APHTHOUS ULCERS (CANKER SORES)**

Aphthous ulcers, commonly called “canker sores,” are red irritated ulcerations (often with a white covering) of various sizes (usually small) that occur on the smooth tissue membranes inside the mouth. This type of sore is different from a “cold sore,” which usually occur at the border of the lip and are the caused by the Herpes Zoster virus. Canker sores are not contagious.

Canker sores can be caused by trauma and sun exposure as well as by highly acidic foods, stress, hormonal changes and sometimes for no apparent reason. Some individuals seem to have a tendency toward these recurrent ulcers. Canker sores are somewhat difficult to treat and last 7 to 14 days. The following are some recommendations that are supported by current research and literature:

### **For prevention:**

Multi-vitamins with **minerals and antioxidants**

The amino acid L-lysine: 500mg tablets, 2-4 times daily

Keep the mouth clean and plaque-free

### **For pain management:**

Use topical ointments such as *Orabase*, *Orajel*, *Cankaid*, *Zilactin*, or other “teething gels.” These ointments are topical anesthetics that can provide temporary comfort and relief. In instances of severe discomfort, a diode laser can be used to “vaporize” the affected tissue, thus increasing patient comfort. This procedure is done in the office by one of our doctors. Please contact our office if you are interested in the diode laser treatment or have any additional questions.