

# Magic mouthwash effective treatment for mouth sore pain caused by radiation therapy

April 16 2019, by Joe Dangor

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"Magic mouthwash," an oral rinse containing diphenhydramine, lidocaine and antacids, significantly reduced pain from oral mucositis, mouth sores, in patients receiving radiation therapy for cancers of the head and neck when compared to placebo. These were the findings of a multi-institution, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, phase III clinical trial, led by Robert Miller, M.D., an emeritus Mayo Clinic radiation oncologist. Dr. Miller and his colleagues published their findings on Tuesday, April 16, in *JAMA*.

"Our group published a study in 2012 showing that an oral rinse of doxepin reduced oral mucositis-related pain, compared to placebo," says Dr. Miller. "However, there were no large randomized controlled trials studying the potential benefits of magic mouthwash."

Dr. Miller and his colleagues studied 275 patients between November 2014 and May 2016. They found that pain related to oral mucositis was significantly less following both doxepin and magic mouthwash rinses versus placebo. They also found that both doxepin and magic mouthwash rinses were well-tolerated by patients.

"Radiation therapy may cause mouth sores because it is designed to kill rapidly growing cells, such as [cancer cells](#)," says co-author, Terence Sio, M.D., a Mayo Clinic radiation oncologist in Arizona. "Unfortunately, [healthy cells](#) in your mouth also divide and grow rapidly, and may be damaged during [radiation therapy](#), which can cause discomfort. We're glad to have identified a proven method to help treat the discomfort of

this side effect."

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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