# Stomatitis

Stomatitis is an inflammation of the mucous lining of the mouth. It can affect either a part or the whole mouth. The intensity of symptoms can range from mild to severe. It can affect your cheek, teeth, gums, lips, or tongue. In almost all cases, the lining of the mouth becomes swollen, red and painful. Painful ulcers can develop in your mouth. There are different types of stomatitis. It can occur due to infection, allergy, improper denture or sharp teeth. Stomatitis recurs in some people.

## CAUSES

There are many common causes of stomatitis. They include:

- Viruses (such as cold sores or shingles).
- Canker sores. The cause is unknown.
- Bacteria (such as ulcerative gingivitis or sexually transmitted diseases).
- Fungus or yeast (such as candidiasis or oral thrush).
- Poor oral hygiene and poor nutrition (Vincent's stomatitis or trench mouth).
- Lack of vitamin B, C, or niacin.
- Dentures or braces that do not fit properly.
- High acid foods (uncommon).
- Sharp or broken teeth.
- Cheek biting.
- Breathing through the mouth.
- Chewing tobacco.
- Allergy to toothpaste, mouthwash, candy, gum, lipstick, or some medicines.
- Burning your mouth with hot drinks or food.
- Occupational exposure to dyes, heavy metals, acid fumes, or mineral dust.

## SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of stomatitis may include:

- Painful ulcers in the mouth.
- Blisters in the mouth.
- Bleeding gums.
- Swollen gums.
- Irritability.
- Bad breath.
- Bad taste.
- Fever.
- Trouble with eating because of burning and pain in the mouth.

## DIAGNOSIS

Your caregiver will examine your mouth. He will look for bleeding gums and mouth ulcers. He may ask you about the medicines you are taking. Your caregiver may suggest blood test and biopsy (removing body tissue for testing) of the mouth ulcer or mass if either is present. This will help him to find out the cause of your condition.

## TREATMENT

Your caregiver will treat you depending on the cause. He will first try to treat your symptoms. You may be given pain-killers to relieve your pain. Topical anesthetic (ointment that numbs the sensation of the area on which it is applied) may have to be tried, if you have severe pain. Your caregiver may give medications which kill germs (*antibiotics*), if you have bacterial infection. Your caregiver may give you antifungals (drugs that are used to treat fungal infection) if you have fungal infection. You may have to take medicines that kill viruses or prevent their growth (*antivirals*), if you have a viral infection like herpes. You may be asked to use medicated mouth rinses. Your caregiver will advise you about proper brushing and using a soft brush. You may have to get your teeth cleaned regularly.

## HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Maintain good oral hygiene. This is especially true for transplant patients.
- Brush your teeth carefully with a soft, nylon-bristled toothbrush.
- Floss at least two times a day.

- Clean your mouth after eating.
- Rinse your mouth with bland saline solution 3-4 times a day.
- Gargle with cold water.
- Use topical numbing medicines to decrease pain if recommended by your caregiver.
- Stop smoking and/or using chewing or smokeless tobacco.
- Avoid eating hot and spicy foods.
- Eat soft and bland food.
- Reduce your stress wherever possible.
- Eat healthy and nutritious food.

## SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Symptoms persist or become worse.
- You develop new symptoms.
- Mouth ulcers are present for more than 3 weeks.
- Mouth ulcers recur frequently.
- You develop increasing difficulty with normal eating and drinking.
- You develop a fever of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.
- You have increasing fatigue or weakness.
- You develop loss of appetite or feel sick to your stomach (*nausea*).

## SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have an oral temperature above 102º F (38.9º C) or as instructed.
- You develop pain, redness or sores around one or both eyes.
- You can not eat or drink because of pain or other symptoms.
- You develop worsening weakness or faint.
- You develop vomiting or diarrhea.
- You develop chest pain, shortness of breath, or rapid irregular heart beats.

## REFERENCES

National Library of Medicine
National Cancer Institute

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