

Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Burning Mouth Syndrome

This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of any forthcoming treatment and contains answers to many of the commonly asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or would like further explanation please ask your surgeon.

What is burning mouth syndrome?

Burning mouth syndrome is a name given to discomfort or pain in the mouth. It often affects the tongue, lips and cheeks but other parts of the skin lining inside the mouth can also feel uncomfortable. Most people with the condition complain of a burning or scalded feeling.

Burning mouth syndrome is a common condition. It often affects women, particularly after the menopause, but men can sometimes get it too. Up to one in three older women report a burning sensation in their mouth.

What is the cause?

- The sensation of burning in the mouth can occasionally be the result of medical or dental problems. These include thrush infections and blood or vitamin deficiencies.
- The hormonal changes around the menopause can be related to burning mouth syndrome.
- It can also occur or get worse when somebody is stressed, anxious or depressed, or going through a difficult time of life. Not knowing why your mouth is burning can also make you anxious.

What will happen to me?

- If you describe a burning sensation in your mouth you will be examined thoroughly to make sure another medical or dental cause is not responsible.
- Some blood tests may be arranged for you, to look for a possible cause.
- Sometimes people get worried that they may have mouth cancer. This is quite a common anxiety of people with burning mouth syndrome. Carrying out a thorough examination and any necessary tests will enable your doctor to reassure you that all is normal with no signs of cancer.

Is there any treatment?

- Hormone replacement therapy hasn't been shown to improve the symptoms, and neither have vitamins if your blood tests are normal.

- Symptoms often improve following reassurance that there is no serious disease present in the mouth. The burning feelings can sometimes be worse at times of stress and go away when life is running more smoothly.
- In the same way that low doses of antidepressants can help patients with neuralgia even if they are not depressed, sometimes low doses of antidepressants can relieve the symptoms of burning mouth syndrome.

What if I don't get better?

We know that we can't always make you better. Trying not to focus on the feeling, learning to live with the sensation, and remembering that no serious disease has been found can sometimes be the best way of managing this common problem.

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Potete chiedere di ottenere queste informazioni in altre lingue, in stampato grande o in audiocassetta.

Italian

若你需要本信息的繁體中文、大字體或音訊格式的版本，請要求索取。

Cantonese

તમને આ માહિતી બીજી ભાષાઓમાં, મોટા અક્ષરોમાં અથવા સાંભળી શકાય એવા માધ્યમ (ઓડીઓ ફોર્મેટ)માં જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો.

Gujarati

تکایه پرسیار بکه نه گهر نهوزانیاریهت دهوی به زمانیکی تر ، به پیتی گهوره یانیش به شیوهی دهنگ

Kurdish

آگر آپ کو یہ معلومات دوسری زبانوں میں، بڑے الفاظ کی اشاعت میں یا آڈیو ٹیپ پر درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی اس کیلئے درخواست کریں۔

Urdu



Addenbrooke's is smoke-free. Please do not smoke anywhere on the site.

For advice on quitting, contact your GP or the NHS smoking helpline free, 0800 169 0 169

Document history

Authors	David Adlam
Department	Oral and Maxillofacial surgery, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trusts, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ, www.addenbrookes.nhs.uk
Contact number	01223 216635
Published	October 2005
Reviewed and reissued	August 2007 (no changes made)
Review date	August 2009
File name	Burning_mouth_syndrome.doc
Version number	2
Ref	673