

Stomatitis: how to recognize it and what to do?



OMNIVAL IMMUN - FOR BETTER IMMUNITY Stomatitis is a general term for inflammation of the oral mucosa, which can occur for a variety of reasons. This inflammation can occur anywhere in the mouth, including the lining of the gums, lips, palate, tongue, and cheeks.

Types of stomatitis vary in their causes and symptoms, and may include aphthous stomatitis, herpetic stomatitis, and chronic stomatitis. **Aphthous stomatitis** is characterized by painful sores on the oral mucosa, while **herpes stomatitis** is caused by the herpes virus and is characterized by painful blisters. **Chronic stomatitis** is a long-term condition characterized by persistent inflammation of the oral mucosa.

Although stomatitis can cause discomfort and pain, most cases are easily treated and have no long-term health consequences. However, it is important to see a doctor if symptoms are severe, last more than a few days, or if they interfere with eating or drinking.

Aphthous stomatitis and herpes stomatitis

Aphthous stomatitis, also called aphthous ulcer, is a disease characterized by the appearance of one or more painful ulcers in the oral mucosa. Its cause is not entirely clear, but it is thought to be related to the immune system's reaction, stress, trauma, certain foods and chemical exposures. Additionally, there are studies showing that aphthous stomatitis can also be caused by vitamin deficiencies, especially B12, folic acid, and iron. The sores are usually white or yellow with a red border and can be very painful, especially when eating and drinking. Treatment for aphthous stomatitis includes pain management, oral hygiene, and stress management. Corticosteroids and other medications may sometimes be used.

Herpetic stomatitis is a condition caused by the herpes simplex virus, usually type 1 (HSV-1). This virus is very common and often infects people in childhood. Herpetic stomatitis may be associated with a "primary infection" when a person is first exposed to HSV-1. Symptoms include fever, general malaise, pain, and painful blisters in the mouth that may burst and become ulcers. These symptoms usually resolve within 1-2 weeks, but the virus stays in the body for life and can cause recurrent infections called cold sores or herpes. Treatment for herpes stomatitis includes pain management, hydration, and antiviral medications if symptoms are severe or recurring.

What causes stomatitis?

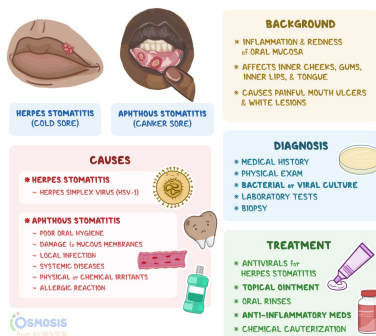
Stomatitis, or inflammation of the oral mucosa, can occur for various reasons.

One of the most common causes is **infection**. It can be a bacterial infection such as strep, a fungal infection such as candidiasis, or a viral infection such as the herpes virus. These infections can be caused by poor oral hygiene, weight loss, diabetes, immunodeficiency conditions, chemotherapy or radiation.

Stomatitis can also be caused by **autoimmune diseases** that affect the mucous membrane. Stomatitis can also be caused by **trauma** such as teeth grinding, brushing too hard, etc.

Some medications, including chemotherapy drugs and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, can cause stomatitis as a side effect. **Vitamin and mineral deficiencies**, including deficiencies in B vitamins, folic acid, iron, and zinc, can also cause stomatitis.

Stomatitis is a very common condition and, according to various sources, can affect up to 20-50% of the adult population. Several factors can increase the risk of stomatitis, including age (stomatitis is more common in children and the elderly), gender (women may be more prone to aphthous stomatitis), genetic factors, and certain lifestyle factors such as smoking or drinking alcohol.



Symptoms of stomatitis

Stomatitis has many symptoms that can vary depending on the type and severity of inflammation.

Pain or discomfort in the mouth: This is one of the most common symptoms of stomatitis. The pain can be constant or only when eating, drinking or talking.

Ulcers: Many people with stomatitis develop mouth ulcers. These sores can be painful and are often white or yellowish with a red border.

Redness and swelling: The lining of the mouth may become red and swollen due to inflammation.

Increased salivation: Some people notice increased salivation when they have stomatitis.

Fever: Especially with severe inflammation or infection, fever may occur.

General discomfort: Some people feel tired, weak or have no appetite with stomatitis.

Symptoms may vary depending on the type of stomatitis. For example, in the case of aphthous stomatitis, one or more painful ulcers usually appear, while in the case of herpetic stomatitis, the appearance of painful vesicles that can burst and become ulcers is characteristic.

If you experience stomatitis symptoms, especially if they are severe or last for more than a few days, it is important to see your doctor. This is especially important if stomatitis interferes with eating or drinking, or if complications such as infection occur.

How to treat stomatitis?

Treatment methods for stomatitis usually depend on its cause and severity of symptoms. Depending on the extent of damage to the oral mucosa, different treatments may be recommended.

Pain relief: Pain relief can be very important, especially with painful ulcers. Possible medications may include local anesthetics such as benzocaine or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen.

Antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal drugs: If stomatitis is caused by an infection, appropriate drugs can be used. Antibiotics can be used to treat bacterial infections, antiviral medications for viral infections, and antifungal medications for fungal infections.

Corticosteroids: Corticosteroids such as hydrocortisone or triamcinolone may be used to reduce inflammation and pain. They can be used as gels or creams that are applied directly to the sores.

Mouth rinsing: Rinsing the mouth with salt water or special mouth rinses can help clean the mouth and reduce pain. It can also help prevent infection if sores develop.

Immunomodulatory drugs: In some cases, especially in severe or recurrent aphthous stomatitis, immunomodulatory drugs such as cyclosporine or tetracycline may be used.

Dietary changes: Some people may find it helpful to make certain dietary changes, such as avoiding foods that irritate the mouth or cause allergic reactions.

Maintaining good oral hygiene: Regular brushing and flossing, regular brushing and regular dental checkups can help prevent stomatitis.

Can stomatitis and its occurrence be prevented?

Prevention of stomatitis is usually related to good oral hygiene and a healthy lifestyle. Here are some factors that can help reduce the risk of stomatitis:

1. **Good oral hygiene:** Brushing your teeth regularly at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and flossing can help reduce the amount of bacteria in your mouth and keep you healthy.
2. **Balanced diet:** A diet rich in vitamins and minerals, especially B vitamins, vitamin C, iron, zinc and folic acid, can help keep the lining of the mouth healthy.
3. **Avoiding irritants:** For some people, certain foods or drinks, such as spicy, hot or acidic foods, can irritate the lining of the mouth and cause stomatitis.
4. **Stress management:** Some people find that stomatitis reoccurs or worsens during periods of high stress. It can help to learn stress management techniques such as relaxation techniques.
5. **Proper use of medications:** Some medications can cause stomatitis as a side effect. If you think your medication may be causing stomatitis, talk to your doctor. He may be able to switch you to a different medication.

Nevertheless, it is always important to remember that even with all preventive measures, stomatitis can occur.

Sources of information:

1. "American Dental Association" (ADA)
2. "Centers for Disease Control and Prevention" (CDC)
3. "Mayo Clinic"
4. "National Institutes of Health" (NIH)
5. "Medscape"