

Question:

Can I catch mouth ulcers?

Answer:

Mouth ulcers cannot be caught by kissing or sharing drinks or utensils unless they are caused by an infection.

Question:

What treatment is there for mouth ulcers?

Answer:

The treatment depends on the cause of the ulcers. Sometimes all that is needed is for a sharp tooth to be smoothed down or a denture adjusted. Some patients may need a variety of gels, mouthwashes or tablets to relieve the symptoms.

Question:

What should I do if I think I have mouth ulcers?

Answer:

If an ulcer lasts for more than a few days you should always ask your dentist or doctor for advice. They may be able to tell you the cause and provide treatment, or they may need to arrange further tests or refer you to a specialist for treatment.

Question:

How can I prevent mouth ulcers?

Answer:

You can reduce the risk of mouth ulcers by:

- Maintaining good oral hygiene
- Using high quality toothbrushes to reduce the risk of damage to your mouth
- Eating a good diet which is rich in vitamins A, B, C and E which includes foods such as fresh fruit and vegetables
- Regularly visiting your dentist

Question:

Should I worry about my ulcers?

Answer:

Most mouth ulcers heal on their own, however if they don't heal within three weeks you should visit your dentist who will be able to examine your mouth to check that the problem is an ulcer and not something more serious.

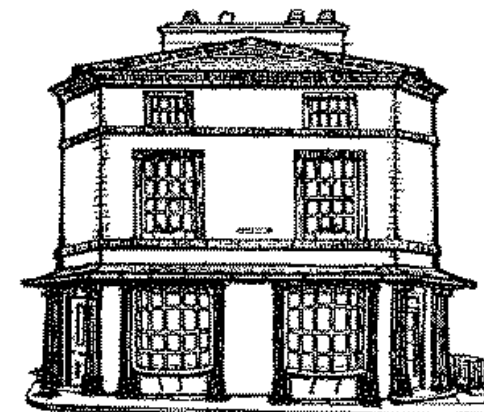
If you suffer from ulcers that come and go often, you should visit your dentist to check that there is not an underlying medical cause that needs treating.

Golden Rules if you have mouth ulcers

Always see your dentist or doctor if:

- the ulcer lasts for more than 3 weeks
- you are unwell
- the ulcers keep coming back

Mouth Ulcers



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Question:

What are mouth ulcers?

Answer:

Mouth Ulcers are painful sores that appear inside the mouth. They are usually red or yellow. They are different from cold sores, which appear on the outer lips and are due to a virus.

Question:

What are the common causes of mouth ulcers?

Answer:

Usually a single mouth ulcer is due to trauma. Eg biting the lip or tongue, sharp edges on teeth or fillings, damage from tooth brushing, or rubbing dentures. These are called "traumatic ulcers".

If you have several mouth ulcers the usual cause is "recurrent aphthous stomatitis" which happens for a variety of reasons.

Question:

How do I know if I have a traumatic ulcer?

Answer:

Traumatic ulcers are usually on their own, next to the cause of the damage, and go away once the source of the problem is removed.

Question:

What are the signs of recurrent aphthous stomatitis?

Answer:

Recurrent aphthous stomatitis is a common problem, and leads to repeated bouts of mouth ulcers in otherwise healthy children and adults. The cause is not known, but it is not infectious and is unlikely to be inherited.

Question:

Are there different types of recurrent mouth ulcers?

Answer:

- Minor ulcers are the most common. They can appear inside the cheeks, on the inside of the lips, tongue and gums, and more rarely on the roof of the mouth. Most of these ulcers are a few millimetres across, and can sometimes come in clusters. You can often get four to six at any one time.
- Large ulcers are more severe and can last for five to ten weeks. They may appear near the tonsils and can be very painful, especially when swallowing. You only usually get one of these at a time.
- It is also possible to get up to 100 very small painful ulcers that last for up to 2 weeks.

The last two varieties are very rare.

You may get ulcers in other parts of the body at the same time as mouth ulcers, such as the eyes or genitals. It is important to tell your dentist about this as it may change the diagnosis and treatment.

Question:

What are the less common causes of mouth ulcers?

Answer:

Infections can cause mouth ulcers. Herpes Simplex often leads to widespread mouth ulcers in children and some adults. Other less common viral and bacterial infections can also cause mouth ulcers.

Mouth ulcers can also be caused by anaemia, some vitamin deficiencies, and occasionally by other blood disorders and some skin or gastro-intestinal diseases. Sometimes the mouth ulcers are the only sign of an underlying disease.

Question:

Can cancer cause mouth ulcers?

Answer:

Cancer of the mouth can first appear as an ulcer. The ulcers caused by mouth cancers are usually single and last a long time without any obvious cause (eg a sharp tooth).

Any ulcer that lasts longer than three weeks should be checked by your dentist.

Ulcers caused by mouth cancers usually appear on or under the tongue, but may occasionally appear somewhere else in the mouth.

Cancer of the mouth is usually associated with heavy smoking or drinking. Doing both together greatly increases the risk.