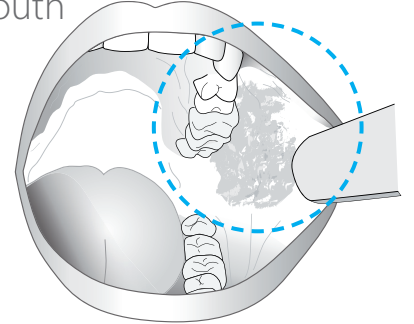


Oral & Maxillofacial Surgical Services

Lichen Planus

Lichen Planus is a common skin disease that often affects the mouth and, occasionally other sites. Often only the mouth is affected.

The disease is not infectious and is not cancer!



Symptoms

Lichen Planus affects up to two percent of the population, mainly those over 40 and is more common in women.

What does it look like?

- In the mouth it can take a number of forms, ranging from white lines to white or red patches and ulcers.
- It tends to affect both sides of the cheek, but may occur on only one side.
- Sometimes the tongue or gums are involved.
- It may affect only the mouth or the skin as well, sites typically affected are: the wrists and shins; sometimes the chest and back; and occasionally the nails or genitals.

What does the mouth feel like?

- There may be burning, sensitivity to certain foods or alcohol, or pain if the area is ulcerated.
- Frequently the condition presents with no symptoms and you may not have been aware of it.

How is it diagnosed?

- It can often be diagnosed just by the appearance.
- Sometimes a small biopsy is needed.

Causes

The cause is unknown.

- Drugs used in the treatment of diabetes, high blood pressure or rheumatoid arthritis may cause similar appearances called "lichenoid" reactions.
- Amalgam fillings may cause similar reactions and may need replacing.
- Stress may cause a flare-up.

How long does it last?

It can last for up to 10 to 15 years but often about 5 years. It typically waxes and wanes in severity and may spontaneously disappear!

Treatment

- Avoid foods that can cause irritation such as: Spicy foods; citrus foods; chocolate; strong or excessive alcohol
- Stop smoking
- Keep your mouth/teeth clean
- A mild antiseptic mouthwash may be helpful
- A milder toothpaste may be helpful
- Appropriate medication, if prescribed.

You will be regularly examined by your dentist or at the hospital.

Most patients have a good response to these measures and appropriate treatment.

Please contact us:

If you have any problems between appointments

Contact:

University Hospitals of Leicester

Website:

www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk

Secretary:

0116 258 6953

email:

maureen.mcnab@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Spire Hospital Leicester

Website:

[www: spirehealthcare.com](http://www.spirehealthcare.com)

Secretary:

0116 265 3014

email:

beverley.marlow@spirehealthcare.com

Nuffield Hospital Leicester

Website:

[www: nuffieldhospitals/hospitals](http://www.nuffieldhospitals/hospitals)

Secretary:

0116 274 3743

email:

linda.cummins@nuffieldhealth.com