

Any complaints or comments?

If you have any problems or comments on the service please contact the doctor or nurses straight away on the telephone number on the back of this sheet.

Or write to the Maxillofacial Department, Royal Surrey County Hospital, Egerton Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XX.

Additional information

- www.dentalhealth.org.uk
- www.patient.co.uk

Reference source

www.BAOMS.org.uk

Notes

Contact details

Maxillofacial Outpatients

Telephone: 01483 406775 (Monday–Friday, 9am–4.30pm). Outside these hours or in case of an emergency call **01483 571122** and ask for the on-call Maxillofacial doctor.

Operation queries/changes

If you need to cancel your operation or for queries regarding your date of operation contact the **Admissions Office** direct on **01483 402734**.

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm
Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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Oral Lichen Planus

Maxillofacial Department



Patient information leaflet

What is Oral Lichen Planus?

Lichen Planus is an inflammatory condition of the mouth (but it can also affect the skin and other areas of the body). In the mouth it is usually found on the cheek mucosa (lining) but can also occur on the tongue, the lips, the gums and the palate (the roof of the mouth). Up to 2% of the population are affected; women slightly more than men and it is more common in middle age.

There is no known cure but treatment can be given to lessen the symptoms.

What is it like?

Lichen Planus does not always produce symptoms. There may be white streaky patches. These may not cause any problems. There may be thicker white patches, which cause some discomfort and a burning sensation. There may be larger, ulcerated and red areas. These sores can be very painful.

What Lichen Planus is not!

- It is not inherited.
- It is not contagious: you cannot pass it onto anyone else by kissing.
- It is not a fungus.
- It is not related to nutrition though some foods you eat may make it feel sore.
- It is not a Cancer.

How do I know that I have Lichen Planus?

The doctor will usually suggest that a small sample of mouth membrane (biopsy) is taken from the sore area. This will confirm the diagnosis and the doctor can make sure that the sore patches in your mouth are not caused by a fungus or an infection.

What causes Lichen Planus?

The cause is unknown. In some rare cases there may be a reaction to medication or dental products; or to chewing gum or sweets. Stress does not cause the condition but may occasionally make it worse.

How is Lichen Planus treated?

Treatment is given for the symptoms. If you do not have any pain or burning sensation treatment may not be necessary. More severe forms of Lichen Planus can be treated with a variety of medicines. These can either be given directly onto the sore areas or swallowed. Steroid preparations applied to the affected areas can sometimes be helpful. Your doctor will advise you on the best treatment for your mouth.

Is there anything else I can do?

- You may find it helpful to keep a diary and look for trigger events when your symptoms are present. Have you eaten a particular food? Have you been through a period of stress? Have you caused any trauma to your mouth, biting your cheek or with a piece of sharp food?

- You may want to avoid spicy foods, citrus juices, tomatoes and caffeinated products like cola and coffee as these foods can make the sore areas worse.
- You may find useful to change to a milder toothpaste.
- It is important to maintain good hygiene in your mouth so have regular check ups with your dentist. Have your teeth cleaned by a professional oral hygienist. An anti-plaque mouthwash might be helpful.
- Give up smoking.

Will I always have Lichen Planus?

This is difficult to answer. Some people suffer only for a few months before the symptoms settle down. Then they may or may not return at a later date. Other people suffer from recurring bouts over many years.

Is Lichen Planus dangerous?

No, although this condition can be very painful and may make eating uncomfortable, it is not life-threatening. However, rarely, in severe cases, pre-cancerous changes can occur so you may need to have your mouth checked every 6-12 months by a specialist.