

Oral dysplasia



Information for patients Charles Clifford Dental Hospital

What is dysplasia?

Dysplasia is a term used by a pathologist to describe changes to the lining cells of your mouth. This is decided after the pathologist looks down a microscope at a sample of the lining inside your mouth (see picture). The term is used when there is some disruption to the cells and is graded as mild, moderate or severe. There may be overlap in the grades and people may have areas of mild and moderate dysplasia.

A suspicion of dysplasia may be raised by the specialist examining your mouth if a red or white patch is seen which would prompt the specialist to suggest a biopsy. This is the procedure by which a sample of the lining inside your mouth is taken. Having dysplasia doesn't mean you have cancer but it increases the risk of developing cancer of the mouth.



Who does it affect?

Dysplasia can affect anyone at any age. However, people who smoke, drink large amounts of alcohol or chew products containing tobacco, such as betel quid or paan, are at greater risk.

How will it affect me?

Dysplasia often causes no problems at all. The severity of your dysplasia may remain unchanged.

However, in a small number of patients, dysplasia progresses to cancer. Patients who continue to smoke and drink alcohol are at much greater risk of this.

How is it treated?

Areas in your mouth which show dysplasia are reviewed by specialist dentists who will assess if appearances in the mouth change with time. Taking photographs of the areas of your mouth affected is commonly done so we can monitor these changes. Sometimes, the area affected is completely removed if your specialist feels that it is necessary. A discussion between you and your specialist will take place before this decision is made. If the grading is severe then treatment will be required in the form of laser or surgical removal.

What happens next?

You will be seen in clinic for regular review. If in the future your specialist is happy that the area in your mouth no longer looks suspicious, you might be discharged or referred back to your dentist for further monitoring of the area.

However, if you continue to smoke, chew tobacco or drink heavily, you will be reviewed for a longer period. If the white or red patch in your mouth appears to have changed, you will also be reviewed for longer. If there are concerns that changes are occurring when inspected in the clinic then a further biopsy of the affected area or any new changes will be required.

Who should I contact if I have any concerns?

If you have any concerns after your procedure please contact:

Oral Medicine Clinic

- **0114 226 5488**
Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm

Other sources of information

Oral Precancer: Dysplasia, Molecular Biology, Microbiology

- www.maxillofacialcenter.com/precancerDysplasia.html



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