

Chronic hyperplastic candidosis



Information for patients

Charles Clifford Dental Hospital

What is chronic hyperplastic candidosis?

Chronic hyperplastic candidosis is a yeast infection in the mouth caused by a type of fungus called candida. Candida lives harmlessly in the mouth and normally causes no problems. However, under certain conditions, signs and symptoms can develop. The infection is not contagious, which means it cannot be passed on to others.

A common symptom of chronic hyperplastic candidosis is the presence of white patches on the inner surfaces of your cheeks, the corners of your mouth and/or on parts of your tongue. The patches do not rub off and often cause no symptoms and you may be unaware they are there until your dentist or doctor tells you. Sometimes there may be red areas mixed in with the white patches. There is a slightly increased risk of developing cancer in areas affected by chronic hyperplastic candidosis. This is similar to the increased risk of mouth cancer in smokers.

Who gets chronic hyperplastic candidosis?

Your chances of developing chronic hyperplastic candidosis are greater if you:

- Smoke
- Have longstanding dry mouth
- Wear dentures, and particularly if you do not remove your dentures at night
- Are taking certain antibiotics, using inhaled or other forms of steroid, or if you are having chemotherapy
- Have low levels of iron, vitamin B12 or folate
- Have uncontrolled diabetes, or a weakened immune system such as in HIV disease
- Have a high sugar intake diet

What are the signs and symptoms of chronic hyperplastic candidosis?

In some cases you will have no symptoms and the condition may only be seen when your mouth is examined. Occasionally if you have chronic hyperplastic candidosis you may notice these symptoms:

- White patches
- Red spots/patches mixed with white patches
- Sore mouth



How can you prevent chronic hyperplastic candidosis?

If you take the following steps you may be able to prevent it from developing:

- Stop smoking
- Maintain good oral and denture hygiene
- Regularly rinse your mouth with water after using steroid inhalers and use a spacer with the inhaler
- Keep good control of your diabetes
- Eat a healthy diet



How is chronic hyperplastic candidosis diagnosed?

Usually it is diagnosed by a dentist or doctor after hearing about the problems you may be experiencing in your mouth and after clinical examination. Additional tests will be used to confirm the diagnosis, e.g. an oral rinse. If you have an oral rinse test you will be asked to rinse your mouth with salty water and spit into a container. We will send this sample to a Microbiology laboratory; where they will identify whether candida is present, and, if so, what type it is. We will also need to take a biopsy of the patch, which means that a small sample of the affected area will be taken and viewed by a pathologist under a microscope. The pathologist will make a diagnosis and check for the presence of candida in the sample or any worrying changes in the cells.

How is chronic hyperplastic candidosis treated?

The aim of treatment is to eliminate candida from the affected area and reduce or remove any other factors, such as smoking, that increase the risk of developing mouth cancer. Any underlying cause must be addressed, for example if you smoke and/or drink alcohol you will be advised to stop smoking and reduce alcohol intake. You will be prescribed some medication to eliminate the candida from your mouth. You may be given a mouthwash called Nystatin which you will need to rinse around your mouth four times each day, usually for 2 weeks. You could also be given a gel called Miconazole.

You will most likely need to take a course of tablets called Fluconazole daily for 1 or 2 weeks but your doctor or specialist will advise you as to the most appropriate treatment. It is important to follow the instructions on how to take your treatment and to complete the course of treatment, even if your symptoms go away earlier. Corsodyl mouthwash [chlorhexidine gluconate] may also be prescribed as it has antifungal properties, but your doctor or specialist will advise you about this. Some medicines used to treat your condition can interfere with other medicines you may be taking. It is therefore important to tell your doctor/dentist about all the medicines you are currently taking. You will be advised how to use the drug chosen for you.

Whilst these treatments eliminate candida, the appearance of the patches may not change very much. If 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. If the white and/or red patch in your mouth appears to change then we will need to take a further biopsy of the affected area and of any new changes. Laser treatment is sometimes required if the medicines do not improve your condition.

Further information

- www.patient.co.uk/doctor/Candidiasis.htm



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