

Burning mouth syndrome

Patient information leaflet

Burning mouth syndrome

This is a common non-sinister and non-contagious condition that mainly affects middle-aged and women more than men. It presents as a persistent soreness or a burning sensation of the mouth.

Causes

- It can be associated with other medical or dental problems such as diabetes, hormonal changes, medications, dry mouth etc.
 - Sometimes it is a result of thrush infections and blood or vitamin deficiencies.
- Stress, anxiety or depression can trigger the problem or make it worse.

Diagnosis

- Burning mouth syndrome is characterized by no visible abnormality.
- Thorough examination to exclude any other medical or dental problem is the first step in diagnosing burning mouth.
- Blood tests are also usually arranged to exclude any deficiencies.
- Most patients have no abnormality in blood tests or clear local problems in the mouth.

Treatment

The doctor will talk to you about all the investigations and results. Reassurance that all is normal with no signs of cancer often improves the symptoms and remembering that can sometimes be the best way of managing this common problem.

In some cases low doses of antidepressants is very effective. Where the clinical findings and investigations are all normal the doctor will reassure you and offer some general advice on managing any distressing symptoms.