## MOUTH ULCERS

### Definitions/ Criteria

- **Mouth Ulcers** – with a traumatic cause such as:
  - Toothbrush injury
  - Biting (e.g. of lip, cheek or tongue)
  - Thermal burns
  - Sharp surfaces on dentures, prostheses, orthodontic braces, tooth restorations or foodstuffs e.g. crisps
- **Mouth Ulcers** – recurrent aphthous stomatitis

### Criteria for Inclusion

- Age over 12 years
- Single ulcer or small number (four to six) of ulcers
- No systemic symptoms

### Criteria for Exclusion

- Ulcers that have persisted for more than 2 weeks
- Children under 12 years (see additional note)
- Ulceration on other mucosal surfaces
- Patients taking cytotoxic drugs (see BNF for full list of drugs)
- Patient looks ill
- Large ulcers (bigger than 1cm diameter) / hidden ulcers
- A painless mouth ulcer
- Any sore that bleed easily

### Action for excluded patients

Referral to General Practitioner or dentist

### Recommended treatments, frequency of administration and maximum dose.

**Chlorhexidine 0.2% w/v mouthwash**

Thoroughly rinse the mouth for about one minute with 10 ml twice daily. Continue to use for 48 hours after the ulcers have gone.

**Bonjela 15g topical** (Age 16 and over only)

Using a clean finger, massage approximately half an inch of gel onto the sore area, not more than every three hours, for a maximum of seven days. Best avoided at term in pregnancy.

**Additional Note:** Due to the withdrawal of Adcortyl in Orabase and MHRA alert re: use of choline salicylate in under 16’s it is no longer possible to treat under 12’s for mouth ulcers as part of this scheme.
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## Follow up and advice

Suggest the patient limits the use of sharp foods (e.g. crisps), spicy foods, hot fluids and carbonated drinks.

Recurrent mouth ulcers cannot be caught by kissing, or by sharing drinks and utensils, because they are not caused by an infection.

If the patient uses oral nicotine replacement therapy such as gum, consider changing to patches or nasal spray if they think that the ulcers started after they started using the nicotine gum.

## Side effects and their management

*See BNF or Product Information where appropriate*

Adcortyl in Orabase should not be used for more than 5 days. Do not use in pregnancy or breast feeding.

Chlorhexidine can cause superficial discolouration of the tongue or teeth. This is not permanent and can largely be prevented by brushing with a conventional toothpaste daily before using the mouthwash.

## When to refer to GP

If ulcer persists for more than 3 weeks then the patient should be referred to their doctor or dentist for further investigation.

Non painful lesions including any lump, thickening or red or white patches

If the patient is systemically ill

Difficulty in swallowing or chewing not associated with a sore lesion

Any sore that bleeds easily