

KERATOSIS (LEUKOPLAKIA)

Please read this information sheet. If you have any questions, particularly about the treatment or potential side-effects, please ask Professor.

- This is an uncommon condition
- Sometimes it is caused by friction or tobacco
- It is not inherited
- It is not known to be infectious
- Blood tests and biopsy may be required
- In a *very small* number, and after years, it may lead to a tumour.
- There is no universally agreed management and this can be by simple observation, drugs, or surgery
- Removal of the affected area does not necessarily remove the problem
- Therefore, the best management is usually to
 - avoid harmful habits such as use of tobacco, alcohol or betel (and for lips – sun-exposure)
 - take a healthy diet rich in fresh fruit and vegetables
 - have your mouth checked by a health care professional at least at 6 monthly intervals
- Changes that might suggest a tumour is developing could include any of the following persisting more than 3 weeks
 - A sore on the lip or in the mouth that does not heal
 - A lump on the lip or in the mouth or throat
 - A white or red patch on the gums, tongue, or lining of the mouth
 - Unusual bleeding, pain, or numbness in the mouth
 - A sore throat that does not go away, or a feeling that something is caught in the throat
 - Difficulty or pain with chewing or swallowing
 - Swelling of the jaw that causes dentures to fit poorly or become uncomfortable
 - A change in the voice; and/or
 - Pain in the ear
 - Enlargement of a neck lymph gland
- Useful websites <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/oralcancer.html>
<http://www.cochrane.org/cochrane/revabstr/ab001829.htm>
<http://www.emedicine.com/ent/topic731.htm>

A patient has the right under common law to give or withhold consent to medical examination or treatment. This is one of the basic principles of health care. Patients are entitled to receive sufficient information in a way they can understand about the proposed treatments, the possible alternatives and any substantial risk or risks which may be special in kind or magnitude or special to the patient, so that they can make a balanced judgement. (UK Health Dept. 19.2.99. HSC 1999/031)

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February 2005