

HIV Infection and Oral Health

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HIV Infection and Oral Health: A Message for Persons Who
Are HIV Positive

A
Message
For
Persons
Who Are
HIV
Positive



RESOURCES YOU CAN CALL

Texas AIDSLINE
1-800-299-AIDS

INFORMATION FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS:

AIDS Helpline for Health Professionals
1-800-548-4659

AIDS Regional Education and Training Centers for Texas and Oklahoma
(713) 794-4075



This pamphlet is dedicated to the memory of Mario Andriolo, Jr., D.D.S., without whom this pamphlet would not have been developed.

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LINE OF DEFENSE

Proper oral care is important to your overall health. This is even more important if you are infected with HIV.

Maintaining good nutrition is vital. This can be hard to do if you have painful gums or other HIV related oral problems.

If found at an early stage most HIV related oral problems can be treated.

WHY BOTHER WITH VISITING THE DENTIST?

If you are HIV positive, most problems that occur in your mouth can be treated. Furthermore, if the problems are diagnosed at an early stage, treatment is more successful. The problems that might occur may cause discomfort and some can even make you severely ill. It's hard to eat a proper diet when it's painful to chew food.

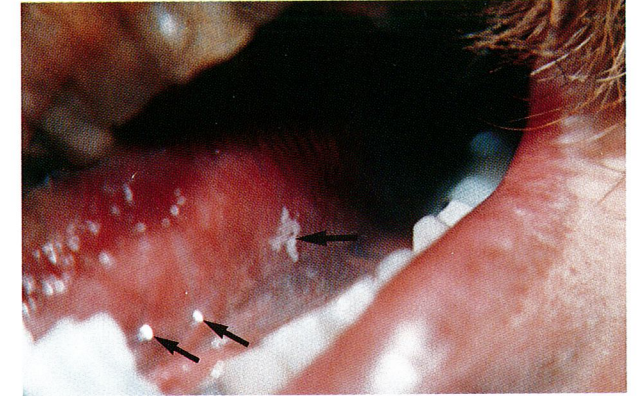
Your dentist can spot these problems early and start treatment. You don't have to end up in pain or lose weight unnecessarily.

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?

The following photos show only the most common oral conditions which occur in HIV-positive individuals. Although these conditions are common, not every HIV positive person will get them. But by knowing what these problems look like, you will be able to detect them at an early stage.

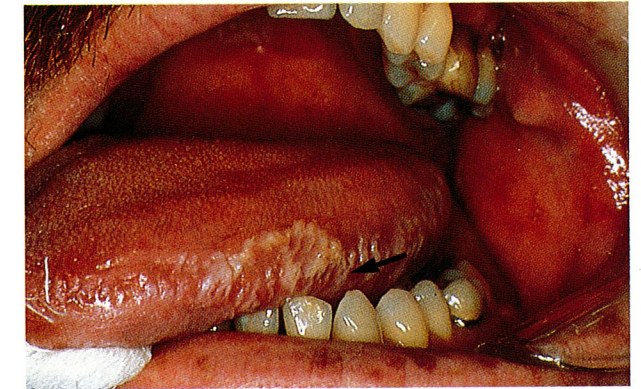
Candidiasis

Candidiasis, or thrush, is an oral fungal infection which commonly occurs in the mouth of HIV+ persons. Candida spots usually appear whitish or yellowish. Candida may also cause splits or fissures at the corners of the mouth. Candidiasis can be successfully treated with several different drugs.



Hairy Leukoplakia

Oral hairy leukoplakia (HL) is seen almost solely in HIV+ persons and may be an early sign of HIV infection. HL is a whitish lesion (that does not wipe away) occurring most frequently on the side of the tongue. Many times HL will look like candidiasis. HL is not painful and is usually not treated because it poses no medical risk.



HIV Related Gingival and Periodontal Problems

Gingivitis refers to inflamed gums. Almost everyone who has teeth has a degree of gingivitis. However, HIV+ persons often get a more severe case of gingivitis.

Gingivitis may appear as a reddish band along the gumline (the part directly against the tooth). The gum tissue can become very sore and may bleed easily especially after brushing, flossing or eating. This condition is most successfully treated in its earliest stages.

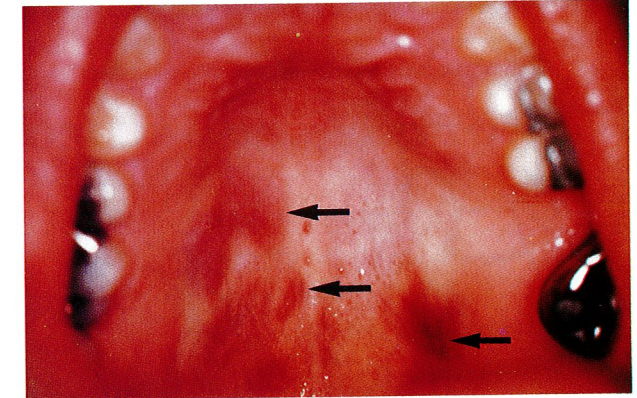
Periodontitis is a more severe form of disease and may progress rapidly. The gums appear to creep down the tooth making the tooth look longer. The pointed piece of gum between the teeth can become blunt or cratered. This condition is painful with pain appearing to come from the bone.

Because these conditions can reoccur, your appointments for professional cleaning and examination may need to be scheduled more frequently.



Kaposi's Sarcoma

Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) is a type of cancer that occurs in some HIV+ individuals. KS usually appears as red, blue or purple spots. While KS may appear anywhere, the first spots often appear in the roof of the mouth. KS lesions may be flat, resembling a bruise, or they may be raised. While a single KS lesion may occur, several lesions are more common as time progresses. KS is usually painless, but KS lesions often become infected with bacteria. There are treatments which can help if this happens.



Other Oral Symptoms of HIV

- Papilloma virus: Wart-like growths
- Lymphoma: Painless swelling in mouth or head and neck area
- Herpes: Recurring painful ulcers on lips or roof of mouth or tongue
- Xerostomia: Dry mouth
- Salivary gland swelling: Usually in front of ear area
- Aphthous ulcers: Painful sores in the mouth
- Acute necrotizing ulcerative gingivitis (ANUG): A painful gum infection

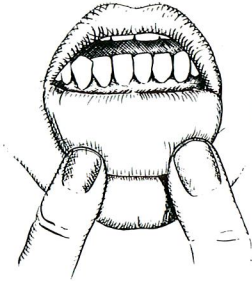
Because HIV+ persons tend to have increased risk of oral problems, early dental evaluation and proper oral care is critical.

CAN I DO SOMETHING MYSELF?

YES! you can give yourself a quick exam when you brush your teeth. The pictures below show you how to pull out your tongue and look in your mouth.

Also, remember that now that you're infected with HIV, proper oral care is more important than ever.

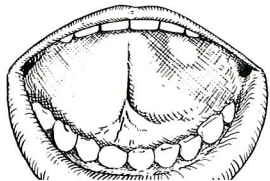
Visual Oral Self Examination



Lip and Gums



Cheek



Floor of Mouth

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM YOUR DENTIST?

You should help your dentist by providing a complete medical history, so that your dentist can help you by prescribing the appropriate treatment and medication.

You can expect information regarding your HIV status to be held in total confidence. You should ask your dentist about this.

You can expect to receive the same high quality care as would be provided all patients, regardless of HIV status.

You can ask your dentist to show you how to examine your mouth for unusual signs or symptoms.

ONCE AGAIN, SIGNS TO WATCH

- Sudden looseness of teeth
- Painful or bleeding gums
- Swelling in your mouth
- White, red, or purple spots in your mouth
- Sores in your mouth

WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION OR CARE?

- Call your own dentist.
- Call the resources listed below.
- Call Texas AIDSLINE.
- Call the Texas Department of Health.
- Call your local health department.