



[Home](#) → [Health Topics](#) → Mouth Disorders

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/mouthdisorders.html>

Mouth Disorders

Your mouth is one of the most important parts of your body. It has many different functions. It allows you to:

- Take in food and drink
- Breathe in air
- Start digestion, with your teeth chewing the food you eat and your salivary glands releasing saliva to help break down the food
- Speak and sing
- Show emotion, by smiling or pouting

Any problem that affects your mouth can make it hard to eat, drink, or even smile. Some common mouth problems include:

- Cold sores [<https://medlineplus.gov/coldsores.html>] - painful sores on the lips and around the mouth, caused by a virus
- Canker sores [<https://medlineplus.gov/cankersores.html>] - painful sores in the mouth, caused by bacteria or viruses
- Thrush - a yeast infection [<https://medlineplus.gov/yeastinfections.html>] that causes white patches in your mouth
- Leukoplakia - white patches of excess cell growth on the cheeks, gums or tongue, common in smokers
- Dry mouth [<https://medlineplus.gov/drymouth.html>] - a lack of enough saliva, caused by some medicines and certain diseases
- Gum [<https://medlineplus.gov/gumdisease.html>] or tooth problems [<https://medlineplus.gov/toothdisorders.html>]
- Bad breath [<https://medlineplus.gov/badbreath.html>]

Treatment for mouth disorders varies, depending on the problem. If a mouth problem is caused by some other disease, treating that disease can help. It is also important to keep your mouth clean and healthy by brushing, flossing, and not using tobacco.

Start Here

- Mouth Problems [<https://familydoctor.org/symptom/mouth-problems/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/sintoma/problemas-de-la-boca/?adfree=true>]
- Mouth Problems in Infants and Children [<https://familydoctor.org/symptom/mouth-problems-infants-children/?adfree=true>]
(American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/sintoma/problemas-de-la-boca-en-lactantes-y-ninos/?adfree=true>]

Diagnosis and Tests




- Mouth Problems [<https://familydoctor.org/symptom/mouth-problems/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/sintoma/problemas-de-la-boca/?adfree=true>]

Living With

- Mouth Dryness or Thick Saliva [<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/eating-problems/dry-mouth.html>] (American Cancer Society)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.org/es/cancer/como-sobrellevar-el-cancer/efectos-secundarios/problemas-alimentarios/resequedad-de-la-boca.html>]


Related Issues

- Facial Hemiatrophy [<https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/7338/progressive-hemifacial-atrophy>]  (Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center)
Also in Spanish [<https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/espanol/13462/atrofia-hemifacial-progresiva>]
- HIV/AIDS & Oral Health [<https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/health-info/hiv-aids>]  (National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/espanol/temas-de-salud/vih-sida-y-la-salud-oral>]
- Mouth Sores Caused by Cancer Treatment: How to Cope [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cancer/in-depth/mouth-sores/ART-20045486?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/cancer/in-depth/mouth-sores/art-20045486?p=1>]
- Oromandibular Dystonia [<https://dystonia-foundation.org/what-is-dystonia/types-dystonia/oromandibular/>]
(Dystonia Medical Research Foundation)
- Spit Happens: The Surprising Importance of Saliva [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2024/01/spit-happens>]  (National Institutes of Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/una-sorpresa-que-le-hara-salivar>]

Specifics

- Burning Mouth Syndrome [<https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/health-info/burning-mouth>]  (National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/espanol/temas-de-salud/sindrome-boca-ardiente>]
- Melkersson-Rosenthal Syndrome [<https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/7010/melkersson-rosenthal-syndrome>]  (Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center)
- Mouth Growths [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/mouth-and-dental-disorders/symptoms-of-oral-and-dental-disorders/mouth-growths>] (Merck & Co., Inc.)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/trastornos-bucales-y-dentales/s%C3%ADntomas-de-los-trastornos-orales-y-dentales/tumores-bucales>]
- Oral Hypersensitivity Reactions [https://www.aaom.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=125:oral-hypersensitivity-reactions&catid=22:patient-condition-information&Itemid=120] (American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons)
- Oral Lichen Planus [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/oral-lichen-planus/symptoms-causes/syc-20350869?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Oral Thrush [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/oral-thrush/symptoms-causes/syc-20353533?p=1>]
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/oral-thrush/symptoms-causes/syc-20353533?p=1>]

Genetics



- White sponge nevus: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/white-sponge-nevus>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Images

- Actinic Cheilitis [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/actinic-cheilitis/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)
- Angular Cheilitis (Perleche) [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/angular-cheilitis-perleche/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)
- Chapped Lips (Cheilitis) [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/cheilitis/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)
- Fordyce Spots [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/fordyce-spots/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)
- Oral Melanotic Macule [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/oral-melanotic-macule/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)
- Oral Mucocele [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/oral-mucocele/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)

- Pemphigus Vulgaris [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/pemphigus-vulgaris/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)
- Perioral Dermatitis [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/perioral-dermatitis/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)
- Thrush (Oral Candidiasis) [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/oral-candidiasis-thrush/child/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)
- Thrush (Oral Candidiasis) in Adults [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/oral-candidiasis-thrush/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Mouth Diseases [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Mouth+Diseases%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Stomatitis, Aphthous [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Stomatitis,+Aphthous%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Health Promotion and Diagnosis of Oral Diseases in Institutionalized Elderly People:... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40724164>]
- Article: Oral health status and quality of life among pregnant women with... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40713632>]
- Article: ChatGpt's accuracy in the diagnosis of oral lesions. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40691556>]
- Mouth Disorders -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Mouth+Diseases%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Reference Desk

- Mouth and Teeth (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/mouth-teeth.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/mouth-teeth.html>]

Find an Expert

- Find an ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat Specialist) [<https://www.enthealth.org/find-ent/>]
(American Academy of Otolaryngology--Head and Neck Surgery)
- Find an Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon [<https://myoms.org/find-a-surgeon/>]
(American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons)
- National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research [<https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/>] 
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/espanol/>]
- National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders [<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/>] 

Children

- Mouth Problems in Infants and Children [<https://familydoctor.org/symptom/mouth-problems-infants-children/?adfree=true>]
(American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/sintoma/problemas-de-la-boca-en-lactantes-y-ninos/?adfree=true>]
- Oral Thrush [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/thrush.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/thrush.html>]

Patient Handouts

- Drooling [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003048.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003048.htm>]
- Gum biopsy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003852.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003852.htm>]

- **Herpangina** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000969.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000969.htm>]
- **Leukoplakia** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001046.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001046.htm>]
- **Lichen planus** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000867.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000867.htm>]
- **Mouth sores** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003059.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003059.htm>]
- **Mouth ulcers** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001448.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001448.htm>]
- **Oral mucous cyst** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001639.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001639.htm>]
- **Perioral dermatitis** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001455.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001455.htm>]
- **Thrush - children and adults** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000626.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000626.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Drooling [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003048.htm>]

Gum biopsy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003852.htm>]

Herpangina [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000969.htm>]

Leukoplakia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001046.htm>]

Lichen planus [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000867.htm>]

Mouth sores [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003059.htm>]

Mouth ulcers [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001448.htm>]

Oral mucositis - self-care [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000047.htm>]

Oral mucous cyst [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001639.htm>]

Oropharynx lesion biopsy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003850.htm>]

Palatal myoclonus [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001637.htm>]

Perioral dermatitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001455.htm>]

Thrush - children and adults [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000626.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Canker Sores [<https://medlineplus.gov/cankersores.html>]

Cold Sores [<https://medlineplus.gov/coldsores.html>]

Dental Health [<https://medlineplus.gov/dentalhealth.html>]

Dry Mouth [<https://medlineplus.gov/drymouth.html>]

Gum Disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/gumdisease.html>]

Head and Neck Cancer [<https://medlineplus.gov/headandneckcancer.html>]

Oral Cancer [<https://medlineplus.gov/oralcancer.html>]

Salivary Gland Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/salivaryglanddisorders.html>]

Speech and Communication Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/speechandcommunicationdisorders.html>]

Swallowing Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/swallowingdisorders.html>]

Throat Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/throatdisorders.html>]

Tongue Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/tonguedisorders.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Mouth Disorders* is the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research [<http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/>]

Other Languages

Find health information in languages other than English [<https://medlineplus.gov/languages/mouthdisorders.html>] on *Mouth Disorders*

MedlinePlus links to health information from the National Institutes of Health and other federal government agencies. MedlinePlus also links to health information from non-government Web sites. See our disclaimer [<https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html>] about external links and our quality guidelines [<https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html>] .

The information on this site should not be used as a substitute for professional medical care or advice. Contact a health care provider if you have questions about your health.

[Learn how to cite this page](#)