

LICHEN PLANUS

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

- This is a common condition
- The cause is unknown
- Children do not usually inherit it from parents
- It is not thought to be infectious
- Lichen planus is sometimes related to diabetes, drugs, dental fillings, or other conditions
- Some patients have the condition on the skin, hair, nails or genitals
- Blood tests and biopsy may be required
- The condition tends to persist in the mouth
- Lichen planus can be controlled but rarely cured, usually with corticosteroids or tacrolimus
- Most lichen planus is benign. *Some forms may rarely*, after years, lead to a tumour; in this case, have yourself checked regularly if the specialist advises
- Removal of the affected area does not necessarily remove the problem
- Therefore, the best management is usually to
 - avoid 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
 - Pain in the ear
 - Enlargement of a neck lymph gland
- Useful websites <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/oralcancer.html>
<http://www.tambcd.edu/lichen/>
<http://www.aad.org/pamphlets/lichen.html>

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)

Professor Crispian Scully CBE

Eastman Dental Institute for Oral Health Care Sciences

and International Centres for Excellence in Dentistry

University of London

256, Gray's Inn Road

London WC1X 8LD

www.eastman.ucl.ac.uk

February2005