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Information for patients



Geographic Tongue

Diagnosis

You have been diagnosed as having 'Geographic Tongue. This condition affects the surface of the tongue producing a red area surrounded by white areas. These red areas have an irregular outline and make the tongue look as if a map had been drawn on it – hence the name 'Geographic Tongue'.



The red and white areas tend to alter in shape and a different pattern may appear from one day to the next. Geographic tongue is not a disease. Its real cause is unknown, although it does tend to run in families.

What can I expect?

Frequently it causes no problems. Sometimes, however, it does cause discomfort; the discomfort is usually made worse by certain foods, especially those which are spicy, salty or very acid. The condition may vary from person to person so avoiding these foods may help.

Treatment

Sometimes a mouth rinse may be prescribed to reduce the local tenderness. Further treatment is rarely needed. However, if the condition becomes very painful or if the appearance changes dramatically, then contact a member of the healthcare team at the Maxillofacial Department.

For further Information/Advice

If you have any problems or need further advice, please contact the Maxillofacial Department at Leighton Hospital on 01270 612479.

You can also get further information from:

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk

Providing you with information you need to make choices about your health.

AboutMyHealth.org

www.aboutmyhealth.org

For support and information on treatments and conditions.

British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (BAOMS)

www.baoms.org.uk

Information about oral and maxillofacial resources and about BAOMS.

NHS Direct

Tel: 0845 4647

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

For health advice, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

We hope you have found this information useful. You should read this information following or together with any advice given by your relevant health professional.

This information is available in audio, Braille and other languages. To request a copy please contact the Patient Information Co-ordinator.

This leaflet has been reviewed by the Readers' Panel January 2011.

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