

## Aphthous ulcer

**These aphthous ulcers recently appeared in my oral cavity. What are they?**

Aphthous ulcer is a form of mouth ulcer that tends to recur. It appears on the soft tissues in the oral cavity, including the mucosa of the cheeks, lips and throat, and the surface of the tongue. It is non-infectious.



Aphthous ulcer present on gums



Aphthous ulcer present on tongue



Aphthous ulcer present on lip

Aphthous ulcer is round or oval initially. Within a day, it becomes a whitish ulcer with a red margin. Sometimes, it really hurts!

**Why do I often have aphthous ulcers? Is it attributable to fried food, inflammation or inadequate sleep?**

Not at all. Actually the etiology of aphthous ulcer has not been confirmed. But the predisposing factors are known as follows:

- Oral tissue trauma
- Mental stress
- Hormonal disturbance, e.g. dysfunctional or insufficient white blood cells
- Immune system disorder, e.g. dysfunctional or insufficient white blood cells
- Gut problems, e.g. indigestion
- Deficiency of vitamins or minerals, such as vitamin B12, folic acid and iron
- Wearing an unfit denture



**They recur all the time. What should I do?**

Go to a doctor for a medical check-up. See if there are predisposing factors that require treatment.

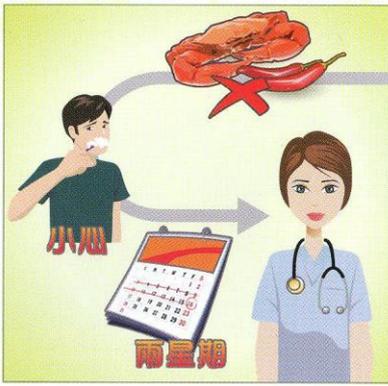


**It hurts most.....**

Avoid salty, spicy or coarse food which irritates the ulcers.

**Sometimes it is unavoidable. Not only eating, it also hurts on drinking, or even talking.**

I know. To minimize the discomfort, you could apply the ointment prescribed by doctor or dentist on the affected region to relieve pain. Also, avoid trauma to the affected area during toothbrushing lest it hurts again.



**When can I say goodbye to aphthous ulcers? Are there medicines that provide a complete cure for aphthous ulcers?**

No, aphthous ulcers usually heal on their own within two weeks. If not, you may be suffering from other diseases and must see a doctor for a check-up.

**Advice from the expert....**

Food: Avoid hot, spicy or coarse food.

Toothbrushing: Avoid trauma to the affected area.

Patience: Aphthous ulcers heal on their own within two weeks.

Vigilance: If they persist over two weeks, consult a doctor for a detailed check-up.