

The Foundation thanks Vidya Sankar, DMD, MHS, Associate Professor, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio Dental School, for authoring this Patient Education Sheet.

Get an accurate diagnosis! There are several things that can cause burning in the oral cavity, including:

- Fungal infections
- Sores in the mouth due to autoimmune dysfunction (aphthous ulcers, geographic tongue, lichen planus, etc.)
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Uncontrolled diseases (thyroid, diabetes, etc.)
- Ill-fitting dental appliances or broken restorations
- Dry mouth

Tips, if the cause of the burning falls into any of the categories listed above:

- Treat the underlying condition – for example, salivary stimulants in dry mouth patients.
- Steer clear of highly spiced foods, as these can irritate the mucosal lining of the mouth.
- Avoid carbonated beverages, alcohol, and natural citrus juices, as these may aggravate the burning.
- Avoid citrus foods such as oranges, lemons, grapefruits, kiwis, pineapples, and strawberries. Acidic foods may aggravate the burning.
- Avoid eating hard, dry foods or take small sips of water to help break them down, as they may aggravate existing sores or ulcers.

If none of those conditions are the cause of the burning, you may have true Burning Mouth Syndrome (BMS) which is thought to be a form of neuropathic pain.

- This is a chronic condition.
- We do not know what causes BMS, nor do we have a cure.
- Medications used to treat neurologic disorders (anxiety, depression) can alleviate the burning.
- Stress management reduction techniques such as meditation, yoga, exercise, and/or psychotherapy may be helpful.
- There is NO association with BMS and oral cancer.

For more information on Sjögren's, visit the Foundation website at www.sjogrens.org, call 301-530-4420, email info@sjogrens.org, or write to the Sjögren's Foundation, 10701 Parkridge Blvd, Ste 170, Reston, VA 20191