

## MOUTH LESIONS: WHITESPOTS

Most white spots are thickenings of normal mouth tissue in response to some form of irritant. The white spot is often harder than the surrounding tissue due to this thickening. Less commonly, white spots can indicate an infection or disease process.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**1. What causes white spots in my mouth?**

White spots in your mouth may be due to the following:

- Cheek biting
- Smoking
- Repeated rubbing from an ill fitting denture
- Repeated rubbing from chewing food on gums in an area where teeth have been lost
- Yeast infection
- Lichen planus (an autoimmune disorder)
- Syphilis
- Cancer

**2. Who is at risk for mouth white spots?**

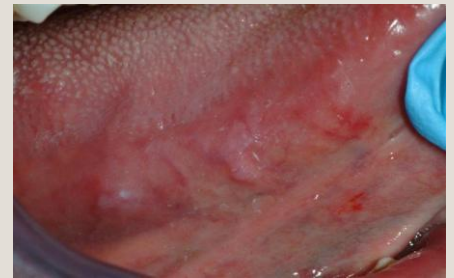
- People that smoke, have a dry mouth or have a weakened immune system are all more susceptible to yeast infections which may appear as an area of redness with a white spot in the middle. Often people that smoke develop white spots in their mouth due to tissue irritation from the smoke. People who grind their teeth commonly develop white lines on their cheeks from trauma. Trauma also causes areas of whiteness where dentures are ill fitting or a person is chewing food on their gums.

**3. What is my role in managing a white spot in my mouth?**

- Note the size, location and duration of the spot. Determine if it is painful and recall if you traumatized the area. If a colored spot persists beyond one week have the area examined by your dentist.

**4. What can happen if I do nothing about the white spot in my mouth?**

- If the white spot is the result of a disease process or a yeast infection it will likely worsen if left untreated. If it is caused by ongoing trauma it will also worsen with time. In the rare event that it is cancer, it can lead to disfigurement or death if not diagnosed and treated in a timely manner.



Oral Cancer



Lichen Planus



Oral Yeast Infection