

### **What is herpes stomatitis?**

- Herpes stomatitis is a mouth infection caused by the herpes virus (the same virus that causes cold sores).
- It is not a sexually transmitted disease.

### **Who can get stomatitis?**

- It is most common in children 1-2 years old who have not had the virus before.

### **What are the symptoms of stomatitis?**

- There are usually many small, sore, open blisters inside the mouth and on the gums and tongue.
- The lips, mouth, gums, and tongue often swell.
- It may be hard for your child to eat because of mouth pain.
- Blisters can make it difficult to swallow and cause drooling.
- Your child may have a high fever, sore throat, and feel tired.

### **Is stomatitis contagious?**

- Yes. It is contagious.
- It can be spread by close contact with cold sores. For example, children should not kiss a parent who has a cold sore.

### **How is stomatitis treated?**

- Stomatitis usually goes away without treatment.
- The doctor may give you medication to put on the sores.
- Your child also may need medication to treat pain and fever. Use acetaminophen (such as Tylenol, Tempra, or Panadol).
- **Do not use aspirin.**
- Wash your hands and your child's hands before eating because of the open sores.
- Give your child plenty of cool liquids to help ease mouth pain. Clear liquids, milk, and shakes are soothing. Ice chips and Pedialyte also can be used. Use a straw if your child has blisters on his lips or tongue.
- Don't give citrus juices (such as orange juice and lemonade) and carbonated drinks (soda). These will probably make the mouth hurt more.
- Soft foods will be easiest for your child to eat. Yogurt, pudding, mashed potatoes, applesauce, and baby food are some. Avoid spicy, hard, and salty foods.
- Rinse your child's mouth with warm water after he eats.
- The doctor may recommend rinsing or gargling with salt water.
- In some cases, children may need medicine to fight the virus. Acyclovir is commonly used.

### **How long does stomatitis last?**

- Blisters usually heal in 1-2 weeks.

### **How can stomatitis be prevented?**

- Wash hands often.
- Do not share drinks, food, or eating utensils.
- Wash any items that come into contact with your child's mouth.

## **When should I call the doctor?**

Call the doctor if...

- your child can't drink or swallow.
- your child has a high temperature.
- your child is fussy and won't settle down.
- symptoms are not better after 3 days.
- you have questions or concerns.

## **What is an emergency?**

Seek immediate care if...

- your child has a high fever.
- your child is dehydrated. Signs include dry lips, no tears when crying, sinking soft spot on an infant's head, no urination in 8 hours, or very dark urine.
- your child is very weak, tired, or hard to wake up.

## **Quick Answers**

- Herpes stomatitis is a mouth infection caused by the herpes virus.
- It is most common in children 1-2 years old.
- Symptoms include many small, sore, open blisters inside the mouth and on the gums and tongue.
- Stomatitis is contagious.
- Stomatitis usually goes away without treatment. Medication is sometimes used.
- Blisters usually heal in 1-2 weeks.
- To prevent the spread of infection, do not share drinks, food, or eating utensils.
- Call the doctor if you have questions or concerns about your child's illness.
- Your child needs immediate care if he is dehydrated.

## **References**

- Health Square. Herpes Stomatitis in Children. (cited 2001 October 15). Available from: URL: <http://www.healthsquare.com/mc/fgmc0615.htm#TOP>
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