

Diseases of the Oral Mucosa



Diseases of the Oral Mucosa: Study Guide and Review

by Melvin A. Shiffman

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The oral mucosa is a complex tissue that lines the inside of the mouth. It is made up of several layers of cells that protect the underlying tissues from damage. The oral mucosa is constantly exposed to a variety of irritants, including food, drink, and bacteria. This can lead to a variety of diseases, ranging from minor irritations to serious infections.

Types of Diseases of the Oral Mucosa

There are many different types of diseases of the oral mucosa. Some of the most common include:

- **Oral cancer** is a type of cancer that develops in the tissues of the mouth. It is the sixth most common cancer in the United States.
- **Oral thrush** is a fungal infection of the mouth. It is caused by the Candida fungus, which is normally found in small amounts in the

mouth. Oral thrush can occur in people of all ages, but it is most common in infants, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems.

- **Oral herpes** is a viral infection of the mouth. It is caused by the herpes simplex virus, which is the same virus that causes cold sores. Oral herpes can cause sores, blisters, and pain in the mouth.
- **Oral lichen planus** is a chronic inflammatory condition of the mouth. It is characterized by white, lacy patches on the inside of the mouth. Oral lichen planus can be painful and can make it difficult to eat and drink.
- **Oral leukoplakia** is a white patch or plaque that develops on the inside of the mouth. It is usually caused by smoking or chewing tobacco. Oral leukoplakia is not cancerous, but it can sometimes develop into oral cancer.
- **Oral erythroplakia** is a red patch or plaque that develops on the inside of the mouth. It is usually caused by smoking or chewing tobacco. Oral erythroplakia is a precancerous condition, which means that it can develop into oral cancer.

Symptoms of Diseases of the Oral Mucosa

The symptoms of diseases of the oral mucosa can vary depending on the type of disease. Some of the most common symptoms include:

- Sores, blisters, or ulcers in the mouth
- Pain or discomfort in the mouth
- Difficulty eating or drinking
- Bleeding from the mouth

- Swelling of the mouth
- Numbness or tingling in the mouth

Diagnosis of Diseases of the Oral Mucosa

The diagnosis of diseases of the oral mucosa is based on a physical examination of the mouth and a review of the patient's medical history. The doctor may also order tests, such as a biopsy, to confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment of Diseases of the Oral Mucosa

The treatment of diseases of the oral mucosa depends on the type of disease. Treatment options may include:

- **Oral cancer** is treated with surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy.
- **Oral thrush** is treated with antifungal medications.
- **Oral herpes** is treated with antiviral medications.
- **Oral lichen planus** is treated with topical corticosteroids and immunosuppressive medications.
- **Oral leukoplakia** is treated with smoking cessation and topical retinoids.
- **Oral erythroplakia** is treated with surgery or laser therapy.

Prevention of Diseases of the Oral Mucosa

The best way to prevent diseases of the oral mucosa is to maintain good oral hygiene. This includes brushing and flossing your teeth twice a day,

eating a healthy diet, and avoiding tobacco products. You should also see your dentist regularly for checkups and cleanings.

Diseases of the oral mucosa are a common problem. They can range from minor irritations to serious infections. It is important to be aware of the symptoms of diseases of the oral mucosa so that you can seek treatment as soon as possible.



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