



BURNING MOUTH SYNDROME

What is burning mouth syndrome?

Burning mouth syndrome (called BMS, for short) is a common problem. People with BMS often feel like they burned their mouth with hot coffee. They may also have a dry mouth, or a bitter or metallic taste in their mouth. Both men and women can get BMS; however, it is especially common in women during or after menopause.

What causes BMS?

For many years, doctors thought that psychological problems, like depression and anxiety, were the cause of BMS. There are now thought to be numerous different underlying possible causes for BMS. Dry mouth (xerostomia), oral thrush, psychological factors, nutritional deficiencies, irritating dentures, nerve disturbance or damage (neuropathy), allergies, tongue-thrusting, teeth-clenching, side effects of medications and endocrine disorders like diabetes or hypothyroidism have all been linked to causing BMS. Your doctor may refer you to a specialist for screening and diagnosis and possibly treatment because BMS is associated with such a wide variety of medical conditions. Your health care team may include a dermatologist, dentist, psychiatrist, psychologist or a doctor who specializes in ear, nose and throat problems.

How can my doctor tell if I have BMS?

There is no simple way to test for BMS. Your doctor may look for a problem in your mouth that might be causing a burning feeling. You may be asked to have various blood tests, complete blood cell counts, allergy tests, oral swab cultures or biopsies and you may have to take a medication regularly.

How is BMS usually treated?

You might be given a medicine that has an effect on the nerves of the tongue. These medications include tricyclic antidepressants and benzodiazepines. It is not exactly clear why these medications help but it may be that they change or alter the taste system. Capsaicin (hot pepper) mouth rinses may help some people with BMS. Burning mouth syndrome can be painful and frustrating. In the short term, you may gain some relief by avoiding irritating substances, chewing on ice chips or sugar-free gum, keeping your dentures out at night and brushing your teeth with baking soda instead of toothpaste. For more information please see www.mayoclinic.com and www.aafp.org under burning mouth syndrome.

**If you have any further questions please call our office at 905-508-2244.
We love to hear from our patients.**