

## Maxillofacial Department

# Angina bullosa haemorrhagica (oral blood blister)

### What is angina bullosa haemorrhagica?

Angina bullosa haemorrhagica (ABH) is a condition where an often painful, but benign, blood-filled blister suddenly develops in the mouth.

The blisters are generally not due to a blood clotting disorder or any other medical disorder.

It is a fairly common and sudden onset blood blistering oral (mouth) disorder. It mainly affects people over 45 years, and both males and females are equally affected.

Usually, there is no family history of the condition. It may be associated with type 2 diabetes, a family history of diabetes or hyperglycaemia.

### What are the signs and symptoms of ABH?

- The first indication is a stinging pain or burning sensation just before the appearance of a blood blister.
- The blisters last only a few minutes and then spontaneously rupture (burst). This leaves a shallow ulcer that heals without scarring, discomfort or pain.
- The blisters reach an average size of 1-3cm in diameter
- The soft palate (back of the mouth) is most affected by ABH.
- If they occur on the palate and are relatively big, they may need to be de-roofed (cut and drained) to ease the sensation of choking
- Occasionally blisters can occur in the buccal mucosa (cheek) and tongue



## Patient Information

- Approximately 1/3 of the patients have blood blisters in more than one location.

### **What are the causes of ABH?**

More than half of the cases are related to minor trauma caused by:

- hot foods
- restorative dentistry (fillings, crowns etc)
- periodontal therapy (treatment of gum disease)

Anaesthetic dental injections and steroid inhalers may also cause ABH.

However, in 50% of cases, no cause can be identified.

### **What is the treatment for ABH?**

- No treatment is usually required as the blood blisters spontaneously rupture and heal.
- Blood tests may be carried out to rule out a blood disorder.
- Performing a biopsy of an intact blister is difficult because of its short duration.
- Any discomfort may be eased by using a benzydamine mouthwash or spray (Difflam™).
- Chlorhexidine mouthwash may reduce any possible secondary infection, and therefore help with healing.

### **What are the other causes of blood blisters in the mouth?**

- oral ulcers
- food allergy
- nutritional deficiency particularly of vitamin B12 and vitamin C
- prescription drugs
- cheek biting
- oral herpes virus

## Patient Information

If you require any further information please contact the Maxillofacial Department: 024 7696 6500

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