

ORAL manifestations of HIV



PLATINUM
HEALTH

SEPTEMBER IS ORAL HEALTH MONTH

HIV weakens your immune system, making you vulnerable to a wide variety of diseases. Oral diseases are especially common.

Here are five oral manifestations of HIV:

1. Oral Warts

Oral warts can develop anywhere inside your mouth. These warts aren't painful but look like raised or smooth bumps that can develop as one or many blemishes. They are much more common among those who are HIV-positive than in the general population.

2. Hairy Leukoplakia

Hairy leukoplakia causes white, hairy patches to develop on the surface of your tongue. Unfortunately, you won't be able to remove these patches with your toothbrush. They can be painful and may affect the way your food tastes, as well. Developing hairy leukoplakia may be the first sign you are HIV-positive and need treatment.

3. Oral Thrush

Oral thrush produces white sores on your tongue and the inside of your mouth. At first glance, it looks similar to hairy leukoplakia, but oral thrush can be wiped away. Keep in mind this may cause bleeding.

Healthy immune systems keep the population of *Candida* under control, but in people with HIV, the condition can grow beyond one's control.

4. Canker Sores

Canker sores are very common, and appear on the insides of your cheeks, lips or even your tongue. These round or oval sores are usually white in the center and red around the edges. They can be uncomfortable when irritated by food or strong liquids and may take as long as 15 days to fully heal.

There is no official cure for canker sores, but your dentist can prescribe medications to ease your symptoms while the sore heals on its own.

5. Gum Disease

People who are HIV-positive develop gum disease more easily than those with healthy immune systems and the inflammation can become a chronic problem. HIV affects your whole body; and your mouth is no exception.

Oral manifestations of HIV are very common and if you are HIV-positive, stay alert for changes inside your mouth. Consult your dentist right away if you notice any outstanding problems.

