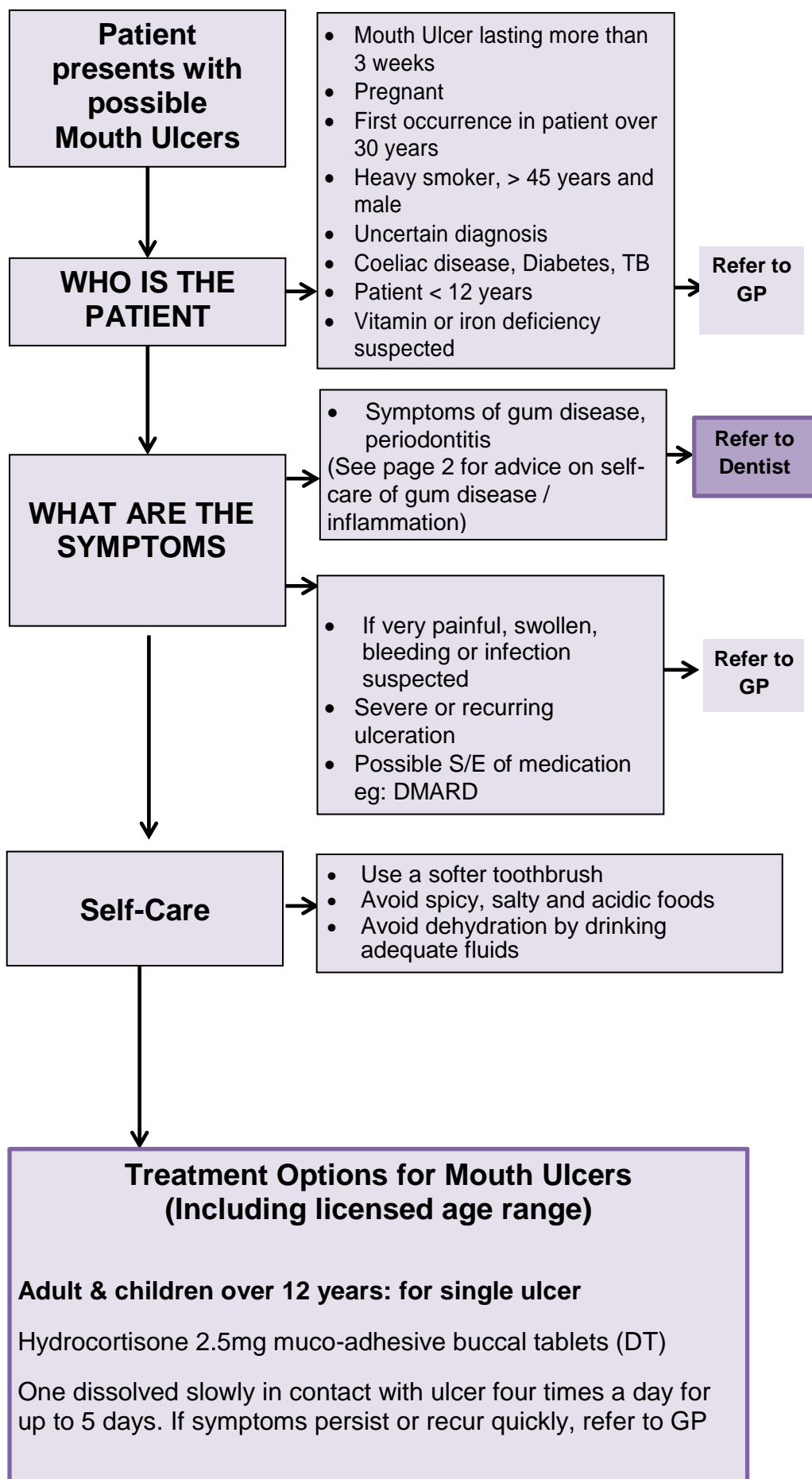


Mouth ulcers are painful recurrent lesions which occur on oral mucosa, especially on buccal areas where teeth or dental appliances may have caused damage.

They are shallow painful sores that have a shedding base with erythematous margins. They may occur singly or in clusters and resolve spontaneously depending on their severity in a week to two months usually with no scarring Mouth ulcers affect 10 to 20% of the population and are more common in childhood to early adulthood.

Ulceration of the oral mucosa may be caused by trauma, recurrent aphthae, infections, carcinoma, dermatological disorders, nutritional deficiencies, gastro-intestinal disease, haematopoietic disorders, and drug therapy. It is important to establish the diagnosis in each case as the majority of these lesions require specific management in addition to local treatment. Local treatment aims to protect the ulcerated area, to relieve pain, to reduce inflammation, or to control secondary infection. Patients with an unexplained mouth ulcer of more than 3 weeks' duration require urgent referral.



## Advice for Self-Care / Non Pharmaceutical Treatment – Mouth Ulcers

If ulcers are infrequent, mild, and not interfering with daily activities (for example eating), treatment may not be needed.

- Rinse mouth with warm salt water (do not swallow the salt mouthwash)
- Avoid 'trigger factors' such as
  - spicy and acidic foods and beverages that may irritate and increase pain
  - oral trauma (e.g. from sharp and/or broken teeth, dentures and orthodontic appliances, and biting during chewing) appropriate dental treatment should be advised
- If smoker advise smoking cessation
- Use softer toothbrush
- Avoid use of toothpaste containing sodium lauryl sulphate
- Use a straw to drink
- Avoid dehydration by drinking adequate fluids
- If ulcers are a suspected side effect of prescribed medication seek advice from GP

## Advice for Self-Care – Inflammation of the Mouth / Gum Disease. No treatment option available on the Minor Ailment formulary

Gum disease is a very common condition where the gums become swollen, sore or infected caused by a buildup of plaque on the teeth. Mild cases of gum disease can usually be treated by maintaining a good level of oral hygiene which includes:

- Brush teeth twice daily for two minutes using a powered toothbrush
- Use dental floss/interdental brushes at least three times weekly
- Smoking cessation
- Attend a dentist or hygienist regularly for review
- Patient with risk factors: (ineffective oral hygiene, smoker, diabetic, immuno- compromised) may be at increased risk of periodontitis and should attend the dentist more regularly.

Advise patients to look up <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Gum-disease/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

**References:** NICE: Oral Ulceration & Inflammation <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/treatment-summary/oral-ulceration-and-inflammation.html>

CKS: Aphthous Ulcer <https://cks.nice.org.uk/aphthous-ulcer#!scenario>

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