

HEALTH

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TCM

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Sore point

The exact cause of mouth sores isn't known, but these painful white or yellow ulcers with red borders tend to be associated with viral infections, food allergies, stress, and nutrient and immune deficiencies. They're prevalent among people living in urban areas.

In traditional Chinese medicine, sores or ulcers are regarded as manifestations of internal disharmony, which is caused by fire irritation. The fire pathogens originate from people's lifestyles.

Working overtime, stress, smoking, excessive alcohol and coffee, and greasy and spicy foods bring about fire or heat pathogens, which then accumulate in different organs.

These pathogens irritate the mouth through different

meridians and cause sores. For example, spleen fire reflects on the inner lips; heart fire reflects on the tongue, particularly the tip; the kidneys reflect on the root of the tongue and the soft palate, and the inner cheeks and gums are linked to the stomach and large intestines.

Sores are treated according to the conditions of the affected organs, origins of the pathogen and symptoms. In TCM, mouth sores are usually attributed to fire in the spleen and heart organs. This kind of sore tends to grow on the inner wall of lips, tongue edges and tip, gums and inner cheeks. Associated

symptoms may be bad breath, thirst, constipation and dark yellow urine.

Therapies aim to clear the fire as well as help the mouth lining to heal. Selected herbs include Chinese rhubarb (left), baical skullcap root, golden thread, lotus plumule and liquorice. Patent drugs such as Cow-bezoar Antitoxic Bolus (*Niu Huang Jie Du Pian*) are applicable for sore throats, toothaches and mouth sores caused by the toxic fires.

In some incidences, mouth sores are from a yin deficiency, where the yang part of the body tends to be overwhelmed and fire pathogens are produced. This could be found in a person suffering from emotional stress or insufficient rest.

They should be treated by a reinforcing method to fortify the weakened organs. Anemarrhena Phellodendron Rehmannia Pill (*Zhi Bo Di Huang Wan*) is used to nourish yin and enhance the kidneys and liver.

Before taking medicine, see your TCM or medical practitioner