

## MOUTH LESIONS: SWELLING

Swelling in your mouth can have several causes. These commonly range from infection, trauma and blocked salivary glands to normal bone growth. Less commonly, mouth swellings may be due to cysts or tumors.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **1. What causes mouth swelling?**

- Swellings in your mouth may be due to the following:
  - Tooth or gum infections
  - Trauma from bite problems or ill fitting dentures
  - Blocked salivary glands
  - Cysts
  - Tumors
  - Normal anatomy of your mouth (i.e. bony growths called “tori” that can develop over time near the base of your teeth)

#### **2. Who is at high risk for mouth swellings?**

- People with untreated bite problems, heavily restored teeth, badly broken down teeth or advanced gum disease are at higher risk for dental infections and are therefore more likely to experience mouth swellings. People with compromised immune systems are also at higher risk for developing mouth infections and therefore swelling.
- People with ill fitting dentures may develop swelling where the denture rubs. People with untreated bite problems may also traumatize their cheeks and tongue resulting in swelling.
- Less commonly, autoimmune disorders such as Sjogren’s Syndrome may lead to swelling in the mouth.

#### **3. What is my role in dealing with swelling in my mouth?**

- Pay attention to the size, shape, color, consistency, location and duration of the swelling. If the swelling lasts longer than one week, grows in size, becomes painful or recurs over time you must have the area examined by your dentist.

#### **4. What can happen if I do nothing about the swelling in my mouth?**

- Ignoring swelling in your mouth can be dangerous. If the swelling is due to an infection it can cause serious damage to your body and may ultimately be life threatening. In the rare event that it is cancer, it can lead to disfigurement or death. Both of these types of swellings must be diagnosed and treated in a timely manner.



Bony growths called “tori” that can develop over time near the base of your teeth.