

FAST FACTS: Oral Pain

The oral cavity consists of the mouth, throat (pharynx), and jaw. It serves both digestive and respiratory functions. The teeth are the most common source of oral pain and are particularly vulnerable to the processes of aging. However, there are many possible causes of oral pain, some are listed below. Oral pain may also be coming from other body regions and may be a symptom of disease in another area of the body.



✓ Possible Causes of Oral Pain

- Dental problems: Cavities; chipped, loose or damaged teeth; food between teeth; gum disease; abscess; tooth grinding
- Oral conditions: infections; cancer or tumors of mouth or tongue, salivary gland disorders
- Jaw conditions: temporomandibular joint (TMJ) syndrome; arthritis; fracture or infection; sinus infection (pain in upper teeth); persistent idiopathic facial pain (cause unknown)

✓ What Medical Professional Assess

- Characteristics of the pain such as: when did it begin; is it acute or chronic pain; location of pain; does the pain radiate?
- Things that trigger the pain
- Associated symptoms such as: fever, weight loss, unable/unwilling to eat, fatigue, chest pain, shortness of breath, swelling in jaw or neck, bad breath or mouth odor

✓ Possible Interventions

- Non-Drug Treatments
 - Oral hygiene including tongue and lips
 - Soft foods or avoidance of foods that make symptoms worse.
 - Relaxation techniques
 - Distraction such as: reading, TV, music, etc.
- Medications
 - Non-opioids
 - Opioids

✓ What Caregivers can do to help their loved one with Oral Pain

- Write down and share information about your loved one's pain with their provider
- Use a [Pain Diary](#) to note important information useful to the provider
- Encourage your loved one to try a non-drug treatment to decrease pain