



Geographic Tongue Frequently Asked Questions

You are receiving this handout today because your physician has diagnosed you with Geographic Tongue, otherwise known as benign migratory glossitis, and wants you to become more informed about your disease process.

WHAT IS GEOGRAPHIC TONGUE?

- Geographic Tongue is a benign (not cancer) inflammatory disorder that affects the top and sides of the tongue. The symptoms caused by this disorder can be alarming, but it is important to remember that it is not a sign of cancer or infection and can be easily managed with appropriate education.



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF GEOGRAPHIC TONGUE?

- Geographic tongue usually presents as crevices, cracks, and patches (lesions) of red areas on the top and sides of the tongue. These lesions are typically surrounded by white borders. As the lesions heal, they will reappear in other areas of your tongue. This pattern of “moving” lesions is what gives the condition its alternative name of benign migratory glossitis. The lesions can also appear on other sites in your mouth, including the cheeks, under your tongue, the roof (or palate) of your mouth and along your gum line. Another, more troublesome, symptom of geographic tongue is the possibility of tongue or mouth discomfort after eating certain substances like spices, sweets, salt or acidic or citrus foods and drinks. This pain can last anywhere from minutes to days depending on the severity of your reaction and the amount of food or drink consumed. The lesions themselves, however, can last anywhere from days to years and can reappear at a later time.



WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT THE PAIN ASSOCIATED WITH GEOGRAPHIC TONGUE?

- As stated above, eating certain substances like spices, sweets, salt or acidic or citrus foods and drinks can cause pain with this disorder. Each person, however, will differ in regards to what types and quantities of foods or drinks induce pain. For example, one individual with geographic tongue may have pain immediately after eating pineapple, but another may not. For this reason, it is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you pay close attention to what you eat or drink and whether or not you experienced mouth or tongue discomfort afterward.



WHAT CAUSES GEOGRAPHIC TONGUE?

- Unfortunately, the exact cause of Geographic Tongue is vastly unknown. There are theories suggesting stress, allergies, diabetes, hormonal disturbances and psoriasis may or may not make an individual more likely to develop this disorder. However, since Geographic Tongue can appear in childhood, as well as later in life and even adulthood, establishing a definitive cause is nearly impossible.

As a Christian, I strongly believe in prayer and pray for all of my patients, especially during surgery. If you would like me to pray with you and your family, please ask.

DO NOT hesitate to contact our office for any emergency at **580-421-6470**. If a problem should arise when the office is closed, you may have us paged through the Mercy Hospital, ADA Operator at **580-332-2323**; or go directly to the nearest Emergency Room.

More information can be found at www.LandrumENT.com.