

This uncommon condition (BMS) affects mostly postmenopausal women aged 50 or over.

The mechanism by which BMS occurs is yet to be understood.

However, there have been links noted between BMS and hormonal disturbances, salivary flow rates, medication side effects, immunological disorders, vascular and neurological disorders.

Neuralgia and sensory disturbances may be involved. In a few cases, deficiency of vitamin B12 or folate may be found. Food allergy may be a precipitating factor.

Smoking habits or alcohol consumption, although potentially factors, are rarely acknowledged as such.

However, for idiopathic BMS, no causative factor can be identified.

Symptoms include burning and soreness in the mouth (including tongue and lips), dryness, tongue sticking to the palate. There may be great thirst and sense of taste may be affected. Pain and discomfort may extend to the throat.

Symptoms tend to worsen as the day goes on.

There may be associated symptoms such as headache, heartburn, colitis, and skin rash.

The stress associated with ongoing unpleasant and distressing symptoms may aggravate those symptoms.

Symptoms may persist throughout life or may disappear spontaneously: there is no cure, treatment being symptomatic.

Treatment strategies:

- Suck ice cubes
- Supplements of vitamin C, B6, B12 and folate, plus zinc, evening primrose oil, may be helpful.
- Anaesthetic sprays
- Mouthwashes
- Artificial saliva
- Avoid spicy foods, nicotine, alcohol, and acid foods.
- Homoeopathy: for sudden onset, mouth numb, dry and red inside, tongue whitish and furred: *Aconite 6c*; mouth dry, red and burning: *Belladonna 6c*; symptoms made worse by cold drinks, soothed by warm ones:

*Arsenicum 6c*

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drink a lot of cold water, burning extends down throat: *Phosphorus 6c*; mouth sore, lips dry, bitter taste in mouth, centre of tongue whitish but margins and tip red:

*Sulphur 6c*.

- Tongue exercise: keep the tip of the tongue against the inner surfaces of the teeth (upper or lower) for 30 seconds, then 1 minute, 2 minutes etc. until mastery of the tongue movements is gained