

Gentle Oral Care for Oral Lichen Planus

Practical tips for making your oral hygiene routine as comfortable as possible

Start with These Simple Habits

- Brush twice daily with an ultra-soft nylon-bristled toothbrush. For more details about brushing teeth, see below.
- Use a plain fluoride gel toothpaste without additives, flavoring agents, whitening ingredients, tartar control, or SLS.
- Clean between your teeth gently once daily with unflavored floss or a water pick as tolerated.
- During flares, aim to reduce irritation rather than stopping oral hygiene completely. See below for more details about oral care during acute flares.
- Keep regular dental visits and tell your dentist/hygienist that you have oral lichen planus.

Ingredients: What to Look For

Note: Try to avoid the ingredients in the red boxes, as they can trigger oral irritation, hypersensitivity, and allergies. However, some patients may be able to tolerate certain ingredients, so trial and error may be necessary.

Ingredient	What it Does	OLP Considerations
Fluoride	Helps prevent cavities and strengthen enamel	Recommended for most patients unless your dentist recommends otherwise
Xylitol	A sugar alcohol that can help reduce cavities and stimulate saliva	Recommended to use, especially to reduce cavity risk and help with dry mouth
Sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS)	Foaming/cleansing agent	Avoid when possible (can cause shedding of the protective mouth lining)
Mint / menthol	Flavoring/cooling agents	Avoid when possible (irritates the mouth surface)
Cinnamon	Flavoring agents	Avoid when possible (irritates the mouth surface)
Alcohol	Used in some mouth rinses	Avoid when possible (can sting inflamed tissue)
Calcium carbonate	Cleaning ingredients	Avoid when possible (can cause abrasion and aggravate mouth ulcers). However, okay to use if not causing discomfort.
Benzoates	Preservative	Avoid when possible; can trigger recurrent mouth ulcers or inflammation

Choosing a Toothpaste

Use a plain fluoride gel toothpaste without additives, flavoring agents, whitening ingredients, tartar control agents, and sodium laurel sulfate (SLS). Try to avoid toothpastes with mint or cinnamon flavorings, when possible. Examples of gentle toothpastes are below:

Toothpaste	Key Ingredients
Dr. Bob's flavor free with fluoride (~\$13/tube)	✓ Contains fluoride, xylitol ✗ Does not contain SLS, alcohol, mint flavor
BJ's Hello Kids Toothpaste (~\$4/tube)	✓ Contains fluoride, xylitol ✗ Does not contain SLS, mint flavor
Cleure Unflavored Toothpaste (~\$13/tube)	✓ Contains fluoride, xylitol ✗ Does not contain SLS, alcohol, mint flavor
OraNurse Unflavored Non-Foaming Toothpaste (~\$4/tube)	✓ Contains fluoride, xylitol ✗ Does not contain SLS, alcohol, mint flavor
Sensodyne Proenamel Kids Toothpaste (~\$4/tube)	✓ Contains fluoride ✗ Does not contain SLS, mint flavor
Arm & Hammer Kids Toothpaste (~\$6/tube)	✓ Contains fluoride ✗ Does not contain SLS, mint flavor
Biotene Toothpaste (~\$6/tube)	✓ Contains fluoride ✗ Does not contain SLS, alcohol Note: Mint-flavored
Tom's of Maine Toothpaste (~\$8/tube)	✓ Contains fluoride, xylitol ✗ Does not contain SLS, alcohol Note: Mint-flavored
Verve Ultra Toothpaste (~\$6/tube)	✓ Contains fluoride ✗ Does not contain SLS Note: Mint-flavored
Squigle Enamel Saver (~\$14/tube)	✓ Contains fluoride, xylitol ✗ Does not contain SLS Note: Mint-flavored
Epic Dental Fluoride & Xylitol Toothpaste (~\$8/tube)	✓ Contains fluoride, xylitol ✗ Does not contain SLS Note: Mint-flavored
TheraBreath Sensitive Toothpaste (~\$14/tube)	✓ Contains fluoride ✗ Does not contain SLS Note: Mint-flavored

Tips for Brushing Teeth

- Use the softest toothbrush possible (typically an ultra-soft nylon toothbrush, occasionally listed as “surgical” or “chemotherapy” toothbrush).
- You could try using a motor toothbrush which will offer better plaque control; however, if your tissues respond poorly to a motorized toothbrush, switch to a manual toothbrush.
- Brush using a modified Bass technique (i.e. holding the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to your teeth and cleaning right at the gumline).

Tips for Cleaning Between Your Teeth

- Cleaning between your teeth is important for reducing cavities. Try to floss as tolerated using an unflavored dental floss. An alternative is water flossing, which is a device that uses pressurized water to clean between the teeth.
 - Example of water flosser: [Click here for website](#)

Mouthwash & Rinses

Mouthwash is not required for everyone. The best ways to promote oral hygiene are by brushing and cleaning between the teeth.

- If you choose to use a mouthwash, choose alcohol-free, mint-free, cinnamon-free, and flavor-free products.
- If your mouthwash causes burning or irritation, stop using it. Consider switching to another mouthwash or stopping mouthwash altogether.

Maintaining Oral Hygiene during Acute Flares

When you are having an acute flare and cannot tolerate your normal oral hygiene routine, try the steps below. Try not to stop your oral hygiene altogether.

- Try using a foam or sponge swab to gently clean your teeth. Examples of these types of swabs are below:
 - [Click here to find on Amazon](#)
 - [Click here to find on Walmart](#)
- Try using an alcohol-free chlorhexidine mouth rinse. Do not use the chlorhexidine mouth rinse for more than a couple weeks, as it may stain teeth.

Other Dental Advice

- At the dental office, avoid the following, especially if your disease is active:
 - Ultrasonic tools
 - Deep cleanings
 - Polishing paste
- If possible, avoid removable prostheses. If you can't avoid them, ensure that they are fitted well so as to not irritate the tissue in your mouth.
- Viscous lidocaine can be used for pain control after speaking with a healthcare provider; however, use with caution because the medicine can be absorbed by your body.

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