



# “My lip’s gone white!”

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A 47-year-old man presents with a nine-month history of a white plaque on his lower lip.

Intraoral exam reveals no concerning findings, nor are there any cutaneous concerns.

The white plaque is soft and smooth and there is no depth to it on palpation. The plaque is asymptomatic, but the patient is worried it may be cancer.

The patient quit smoking 18 years ago and hasn’t used any other tobacco products since. He is otherwise healthy and is not taking any medications.



Figure 1. Patient showing white plaque on the lower lip.

## 1. What is the most likely diagnosis?

- Allergic contact dermatitis to mercury amalgam
- Lichen planus
- Lichen sclerosus
- Squamous cell carcinoma
- Leukoplakia

## 2. What is the main concern with this white plaque?

- Malignant transformation
- Cosmetic
- May become widespread
- May be contagious
- Will become painful over time

## 3. How could you manage this plaque?

- Wait & watch; evaluate every six months
- Liquid nitrogen cryotherapy
- Surgery by scalpel or carbon dioxide laser
- Mid-potency topical steroid
- a, b & c **Dx**

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“Case in Point” is a series of interesting cases and diagnoses so general practitioners can sharpen their skills. Submissions and feedback can be sent to [diagnosis@sta.ca](mailto:diagnosis@sta.ca).

Answers: 1-e ; 2-a; 3-e