

Glossary of Descriptive Terminology Commonly Used to Describe Oral Lesions

Bulla

A Blister like lesion ≥ 1 cm in diameter that contains serum and possibly extravastated blood

Desquamative

The oral epithelium is sloughing caused by separation from the submucosa. Desquamative lesions are often preceded by bullae.

Ecchymosis

Oral ecchymoses normally originate from trauma clinically appearing as an area of oral submucosal hemmorhage > 2 cm. at its greatest dimension.

Endophytic

An oral mucosal lesion that extends inwards to the adjacent tissues and are characteristically indurated.

Erosion

The epithelial surface of the oral mucosa is thinning characterized by being red in colour or erythematous.

Erythematous

The oral mucosa is red in colour resulting either from erosion of the epithelial surface or from increased vascularity.

Exophytic

An oral mucosal lesion that extends outward from the adjacent mucosa.

Indurated

An oral mucosal lesion that is firm when palpated.

Keratinized

An adherent white patch that cannot be removed or wiped off caused by excess keratin on the epithelial surface of the oral mucosa.

Macule

A flat, circumscribed, pigmented lesion on the oral mucosa.

Neoplasm

Abnormal new mass of tissue

Nodule

An elevated, circumscribed lesion on the oral mucosa.

Papillary

An oral mucosal lesion with a surface consisting of numerous blunted projections.

Papule

A well circumscribed, slightly elevated solid lesion on the oral mucosa.

Pedunculated

Refers to a mode of attachment to the adjacent mucosa by a narrow stalk

Petechiae

Small hemorrhages in the oral submucosa characterized by multiple small erythematous spots on the affected mucosa

Pseudomembrane

A non-adherent covering on an oral ulcer that consists of an accumulation of necrotic debris. Pseudomembranes are normally white to yellowish in colour.

Sessile

Refers to a mode of attachment to the adjacent mucosa by a broad base

Ulcer

A localized area demonstrating a complete loss of oral epithelium

Example: aphthous ulcer

Verrucous

An oral mucosal lesion with a surface composed of numerous elongated projections.

Example: verrucous carcinoma

Vesicle

A small blister less than .5 cm. at its greatest dimension on the oral mucosa

Example: