

# Treating oral lichen planus with topical and systemic medications.

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## Abstract

**Oral Lichen Planus (OLP) is a chronic inflammatory disorder that affects the mucous membranes of the mouth. It presents with white or grayish patches, sores, and ulcers that can cause discomfort and pain, making it difficult to eat and talk. While the exact cause of OLP is unknown, it is believed to be an autoimmune condition that can be triggered by stress, certain medications, or other underlying health conditions. There is no cure for OLP, but the symptoms can be managed with medications. Topical and systemic medications are the most common treatments for OLP. In this article, we will discuss how these medications work, the different types of medications available, and their benefits and side effects.**

**Keywords:** Oral Lichen Planus, Mucous membranes, Medications.

## Topical Medications

Topical medications are applied directly to the affected area of the mouth. They are usually the first line of treatment for OLP, as they are less invasive than systemic medications and have fewer side effects.

### Corticosteroids

Corticosteroids are the most commonly prescribed topical medication for OLP. Inflammation is reduced and the immune system is suppressed by them. Corticosteroids can be applied in the form of a mouth rinse, gel, or cream. A mouth rinse is the most convenient form of corticosteroid treatment for patients with OLP, as it can be easily swished around the mouth for a few minutes and then spit out. The rinse should not be swallowed. A gel or cream is applied directly to the affected area of the mouth with a cotton swab or finger. The medication should be left on the affected area for a few minutes before rinsing the mouth with water. Corticosteroids can provide quick relief from OLP symptoms, such as pain and inflammation. However, long-term use of corticosteroids can cause side effects, such as thinning of the skin, increased risk of infection, and high blood pressure. Therefore, it is important to follow the instructions of the prescribing dentist or doctor and to use corticosteroids only for short periods [1].

### Immunosuppressants

Immunosuppressants are medications that suppress the immune system, which is overactive in patients with OLP. They are used to reduce inflammation and prevent the immune system from attacking healthy cells in the mouth. Tacrolimus and pimecrolimus are two immunosuppressants that are commonly used to treat OLP. These medications can be applied in the form of a topical ointment or cream.

They are effective in reducing inflammation and improving OLP symptoms, such as pain and itching. However, like corticosteroids, long-term use of immunosuppressants can lead to side effects, such as an increased risk of infection and skin cancer. Therefore, patients should use these medications under the close supervision of their dentist or doctor [2].

## Systemic Medications

Systemic medications are medications that are taken orally or injected into the body. They are used when topical medications are not effective or when OLP symptoms are severe [3,4].

### Corticosteroids

A systemic corticosteroid reduces inflammation and suppresses the immune system. They are effective in treating severe cases of OLP that do not respond to topical medications. However, systemic corticosteroids have a higher risk of side effects than topical corticosteroids. Long-term use of systemic corticosteroids can cause weight gain, high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis, and other health problems. Therefore, systemic corticosteroids are usually prescribed for short periods of time.

### Retinoids

A vitamin A derivative, retinoids are medications used to treat skin problems. They are used to reduce inflammation and improve the immune system. Oral retinoids are commonly used to treat severe cases of OLP that do not respond to other treatments. Oral retinoids work by inhibiting the growth and differentiation of immune cells in the mouth. Oral retinoids can have side effects, such as dry skin, cracked lips, and an increased risk of birth defects in pregnant women. Therefore, patients should use oral retinoids only under the close

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supervision of their dentist or doctor. Topical retinoids can be applied directly to the affected area of the mouth. They are less likely to cause side effects than oral retinoids, but they may not be as effective in treating severe cases of OLP.

### ***Immunosuppressants***

Systemic immunosuppressants, such as azathioprine and cyclosporine, are used to suppress the immune system and reduce inflammation in severe cases of OLP. These medications are usually prescribed when other treatments have failed or when OLP symptoms are severe. Systemic immunosuppressants can have side effects, such as an increased risk of infection and liver damage. Therefore, patients should use these medications only under the close supervision of their dentist or doctor [5].

### **Conclusion**

Oral Lichen Planus is a chronic inflammatory disorder that affects the mucous membranes of the mouth. While there is no cure for OLP, medications can help manage the symptoms. Topical medications are usually the first line of treatment for OLP, as they have fewer side effects than systemic medications. Corticosteroids and immunosuppressants are the most commonly prescribed topical medications for OLP. Systemic medications, such as corticosteroids, retinoids, and immunosuppressants, are used when OLP symptoms are severe or when topical medications are not effective. It is important to use these medications under the close supervision of a dentist or doctor, as they can have side effects if used

improperly or for long periods. With proper treatment and management, patients with OLP can lead a comfortable and healthy life.

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