



APHTHAE

The word aphthae is usually used for any painful ulcer of the mucosa, especially the oral mucosa. True aphthae, however, are considered, when one or more areas are ulcerated in the mouth. They have a recurrent pattern and rapid onset. They are painful, well demarcated, necrotic at first, and not preceded by vesicles or bullae.

The best term to define this recurrent entity due to multiple etiologies is recurrent aphthous stomatitis. By current concepts, other processes that produce ulcers in the oral mucosa must not be called aphthae, when they are due to trauma, contact allergy, drug reactions, or Behçet's disease.

Recurrent aphthous stomatitis is very common, affecting 10 to 30% of population and of any age. It is slightly more frequent in women (57%: 52%). Secondary bacterial infections can occur, which delay the disappearance of the aphthae.

Treatment involves the use of cauterizing agents, anti-septics, antibiotics oral mucosa protective agents, and topical anesthetics. The fact is that there are no cures. Fortunately, the condition eventually dissipates.

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