



COVID TONGUE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW REPORT #2912

BACKGROUND: Macroglossia is the abnormal enlargement of the tongue and may be found in individuals affected by certain inherited or congenital disorders including Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome, acromegaly, primary amyloidosis, congenital hypothyroidism, Down syndrome, or Apert syndrome. Macroglossia may also be a sign of certain acquired disorders, including malignancies, metabolic/endocrine disorders, and inflammatory or infectious diseases. Dominant genetic disorders occur when only a single copy of an abnormal gene is necessary for the appearance of the disease. The abnormal gene can be inherited from either parent or can be the result of a new mutation in the affected individual. The risk of passing the abnormal gene from affected parent to offspring is 50% for each pregnancy regardless of the child being male or female. (Source: <https://rarediseases.org/rare-diseases/macroglossia/>)

COVID AND ORAL HEALTH: Common COVID symptoms like lost or altered sense of taste, dry mouth, and sores may last long after other symptoms disappear. Brazilian researchers studied oral health symptoms in nearly 65,000 COVID patients around the world. They found patients with COVID can have a reduced sense of taste; a distorted sense of taste, in which everything tastes sweet, sour, bitter or metallic; or a total loss of all taste. Dr. Edmond Hewlett, a spokesman for the American Dental Association who reviewed the study, said, "Regarding COVID-19 patients specifically, the important message is to maintain healthy oral health habits during their illness if they are able to do so." Some COVID patients in the study reported lesions on or under their tongue or along the gums and sides of the mouth. Hewlett said these complications are not unique to COVID-19 and they don't happen to everyone. Oral health issues have risen during the pandemic as many patients have put off routine checkups. (Source: <https://www.webmd.com/lung/news/20210908/heres-how-covid-19-can-affect-your-mouth#1>)

TREATMENTS FOR MACROGLOSSIA: Diagnosing macroglossia includes a physical exam where your doctor will check the size of your tongue in proportion to the rest of your mouth, and look for lesions, swelling, or discoloration. They will look at medical history to narrow down what's causing your enlarged tongue. Then, depending on answers from those, your doctor will recommend certain blood tests which may include a thyroid function test. Finally, a CT or MRI scan will let your doctor examine the tissues in and around your mouth. Speech therapy is used to treat mild macroglossia where a speech therapist teaches you how to control your tongue position and improve how you speak. If medication can help the underlying cause, it will likely be prescribed. Underlying causes may include hypothyroidism, acromegaly, and tuberculosis. Orthodontic treatment may be necessary if dental issues, like misaligned teeth spacing, are present. This may also be used after macroglossia surgery. Finally, about 10 percent of macroglossia cases require surgery which can involve removing part of the tongue, called a glossectomy. Benefits of surgery include reduced drooling, improved ability to eat, and improved speech. (Source: <https://www.healthline.com/health/big-tongue#diagnosis>)

✉ **For More Information, Contact:**

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