

Tongue - Geographic

Definition

- Map-like red patches on the tongue
- Cause not known

Health Information

Symptoms

- Smooth red patches of different shapes and sizes.
- The pattern looks like a map of islands.
- The red patches have a whitish border
- The shapes can change from week to week.
- The bare spots are usually painless.
- The child does not lose the sense of taste.
- The condition usually occurs in children under age 6.

Cause

- The cause is not known.
- It may be related to food allergies or other irritants.
- A vitamin deficiency could also be the cause. This can occur if your child is a picky eater.
- Also, this can run in families. (genetic)
- It's not caused by an infection.

Care Advice

1. **Overview:**
 - Geographic tongue is harmless.
 - It occurs mainly in children age 2 to 6 years.
 - It cannot spread to other children.
 - Here is some care advice that should help.
2. **Vitamins:**
 - If your child is a picky eater, start your child on a multi-vitamin. Give daily.
3. **Avoid Triggers:**
 - Avoid any foods that make it worse.
4. **Treatment:**
 - Usually no treatment is helpful or needed.
5. **What to Expect:**
 - The tongue returns to normal on its own.
 - This can take months up to 2 years.
 - During this time, your child won't have any symptoms.

Call Your Doctor If

- The tongue becomes painful
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

Author: Barton Schmitt MD, FAAP

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