

Contact Details

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**Use the space below to write in the
name and contact details of your Consultant**

Name
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Reapproved: September 2025
Review Date: September 2028

Patient Information Leaflet

Lichen Planus



Please speak to a member of staff if you need this
leaflet in large print, braille, audio
or another language

Introduction

This leaflet provides you with information on what to expect during your treatment.

What is lichen planus?

Lichen planus is a well recognised condition which generally occurs in 30 to 70 year olds and in all sexes. It affects:

- **The skin.** Usually the arms, especially the wrist, legs and the shins.
- **The lining of the mouth.** This can range from slightly raised white lines in an interwoven lacy ring like pattern to the most common form of white patches, redness and ulcers.

The white patches last on average 4 years but can last up to 10-15 years.

If it occurs on one cheek it will usually be the same on the other (symmetrical). Sometimes it may not be symmetrical if the cheek or tongue is in contact with a metal (amalgam) filling.

- **Gastro intestinal tract.** This is the tube which leads from the throat to the stomach. Further information will be provided at the appointment.
- **The reproductive organs in all sexes.**

What causes lichen planus?

It is not known or fully understood what causes lichen planus however, it is non infectious.

Certain drugs such as those used in treatment of diabetes, high blood pressure and rheumatoid arthritis can cause lichen planus type lesions. These are not usually symmetrical and are called 'lichenoid reactions'.

Lichen planus treatment

The consultant may wish to take a small sample (biopsy) of any affected area to confirm the diagnosis if lesions are found.

This is a simple procedure and is carried out with a local anaesthetic. The treatment can reduce the soreness that lichen planus can cause.

The treatment often involves the use of steroids as they dampen down the immune response. These can be in the form of a mouthwash and sometimes an injection to the area.

What can I do to help the condition?

You can help yourself by:

- Avoiding spicy foods.
- Eating plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables and yoghurt.
- Maintaining good oral hygiene.