

Hospice Palliative Care

Tip of the Month

Oropharyngeal Candidiasis or “Thrush”

Common in seriously ill and dying patients
~ may be oral and/or esophageal

Risk Factors: dentures, advanced age, diabetes, recent antibiotic use, dry mouth, chemotherapy, radiation, AIDS

Diagnosis: white cottage-cheese like plaques on the tongue, palate or mucous membranes ~ when removed leave a red or bleeding painful area

Symptoms: may be asymptomatic but often leads to oral pain, sore throat, bad breath, diminished appetite, alterations in taste and reduced oral intake

Treatment: depends on many factors: symptoms, prognosis, overall condition

- Includes 10 – 14 days of antifungal drugs
- Nystatin suspension 200,000 – 400,000 IU 4 – 5 times/day
- Clotrimazole (10 mg troches 5 times a day) if tolerated
- Systemic therapy: Fluconazole or Itraconazole