



# Benign and Malignant Oral Lesions in Children and Adolescents

## An Organized Approach to Diagnosis and Management

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### KEYWORDS

- Oral cavity • Oral lesion • Benign tumor • Malignant tumor • Vascular lesion
- Hemangioma • Lymphatic malformation • Odontogenic cyst

### KEY POINTS

- A greater than 9% incidence of oral mucosal lesions in the pediatric population has been reported in the current literature.
- Although representing less than 10% of oral tumors, malignancies occur in the pediatric population and harbor devastating consequences on quality of life and survival.
- Accurate differentiation between benign and malignant oral lesions mandates an understanding of the possible differential diagnosis as well as optimal diagnostic and therapeutic strategies.

### INTRODUCTION

Although many oral cavity lesions encountered in children and adolescents represent benign processes, a small but significant portion may be a sign an impending serious event, underlying systemic illness, or even malignancy. Furthermore,

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Financial Disclosures and Conflicts of Interest: None.

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Pediatr Clin N Am 65 (2018) 1033–1050  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pcl.2018.05.013>

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numerous seemingly benign entities harbor locally destructive behavior, so the broad differential diagnosis and appropriate work-up of oral lesions are of paramount importance to physicians involved in the care of children and adolescents (Box 1). Hence, familiarity with clinical features meriting further work-up may facilitate the identification of troublesome pathologies at an earlier stage. This review encompasses diagnostic and therapeutic strategies for oral lesions, with an emphasis on oral cavity masses.

### Box 1

#### Common pediatric benign and malignant oral lesions

##### Vascular

- IH
- Lymphangioma
- VM
- Pyogenic granuloma

##### Cysts and pseudocysts

- Mucocele
- Ranula
- Nonodontogenic
  - Epstein pearl
  - Bohn nodule
  - Foregut duplication cyst
  - Dermoid cyst
- Odontogenic
  - Radicular (periapical) cyst
  - Dentigerous cyst

##### Salivary gland pathology

- Sialolithiasis
- NS
- Pleomorphic adenoma

##### Benign tumors

- Nonodontogenic
  - Osteoma
  - Peripheral giant cell granuloma
  - Squamous papilloma
- Odontogenic
  - Ameloblastoma
  - KCOTs
  - Odontomas

##### Malignant tumors

- Lymphoma
- Rhabdomyosarcoma
- Osteosarcoma
- Squamous cell carcinoma

##### Miscellaneous

- Aphthous stomatitis
- Mucosal neuromas—multiple endocrine neoplasia type 2B
- Plexiform neurofibromas—neurofibromatosis
- Parulis
- Oral candidiasis
- Herpetic gingivostomatitis
- Strawberry tongue—Kawasaki disease

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