Smoker's keratosis

What is smokers keratosis?

Smoker's keratosis is a white patch in the mouth of someone who is a smoker, which might or might not be in an area of the mouth that is subject to friction.

Commonly, these patches occur on the palate (roof of the mouth) as a white ‘tile-like’ pattern with little red spots.

What symptoms will I have?

Smoker's keratosis is usually painless.

Why does it develop?

We think smoker's keratosis develops in some people because the chemicals in the cigarette smoke induce inflammatory reactive changes in the skin lining the mouth.

What will my dentist do?

If your dentist notices that you have smoker's keratosis, s/he will usually recommend that you at least greatly reduce your smoking (ceasing altogether will be best for your general health).

Is it serious?

In rare cases, smoker's keratosis can be pre-cancerous.