

CASE 38-3

An 18-year-old female presents with painful lesions on the tongue (A) and lower lip (B). She reports frequent episodes of similar lesions that last a week to 10 days. **The one most likely diagnosis is**



- (A) Recurrent intraoral herpes
- (B) Trauma-associated ulcerations
- (C) Cicatricial pemphigoid
- (D) Recurrent aphthous stomatitis
- (E) Herpes zoster

The correct answer is (D), recurrent aphthous stomatitis.

Recurrent aphthous stomatitis presents as recurring painful episodes of ulcers affecting most frequently the non-masticatory mucosa. They are not preceded by vesicles and they last usually 7 to 14 days depending on the size.

Recurrent intraoral herpes is characterized by vesicles that ulcerate. It is usually seen on the masticatory mucosa, that is palate and gingiva. Cicatricial pemphigoid is a vesiculobullous disease, but does not present with intermittent, recurring episodes of ulcers that heal. Lesions of herpes zoster, when occurring in the mouth or face, have a unilateral distribution.