Say Aah!

Now, look in the mirror.

March 5, 2018 By Kate Ferguson

There’s a reason doctors ask folks to stick out their tongue during office visits. That’s because this body part can reveal a lot about your health.

According to doctors, a healthy tongue should be pink and covered with small nodules, called papillae, and feel perfectly fine with no aches and pains. But when that’s not the case and this fleshy, muscular, hardworking organ is coated with a white film or spots, appears otherwise discolored (yikes!), or is sore or dotted with painful bumps for two weeks or more, it’s time to book an appointment with your health care provider.

Sometimes, the tongue is grooved with vertical fissures that resemble cracks on its surface. Researchers believe fissured tongues might result from underlying conditions, such as malnutrition or infection (the condition also affects about 80 percent of people with Down syndrome), so if your tongue is criscrossed with grooves, get that checked out.

Otherwise, practice prevention: Study your tongue each day when it’s teeth brushing time, experts suggest.

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