

Fig 1: Fibrous epulis arising from lower gingiva



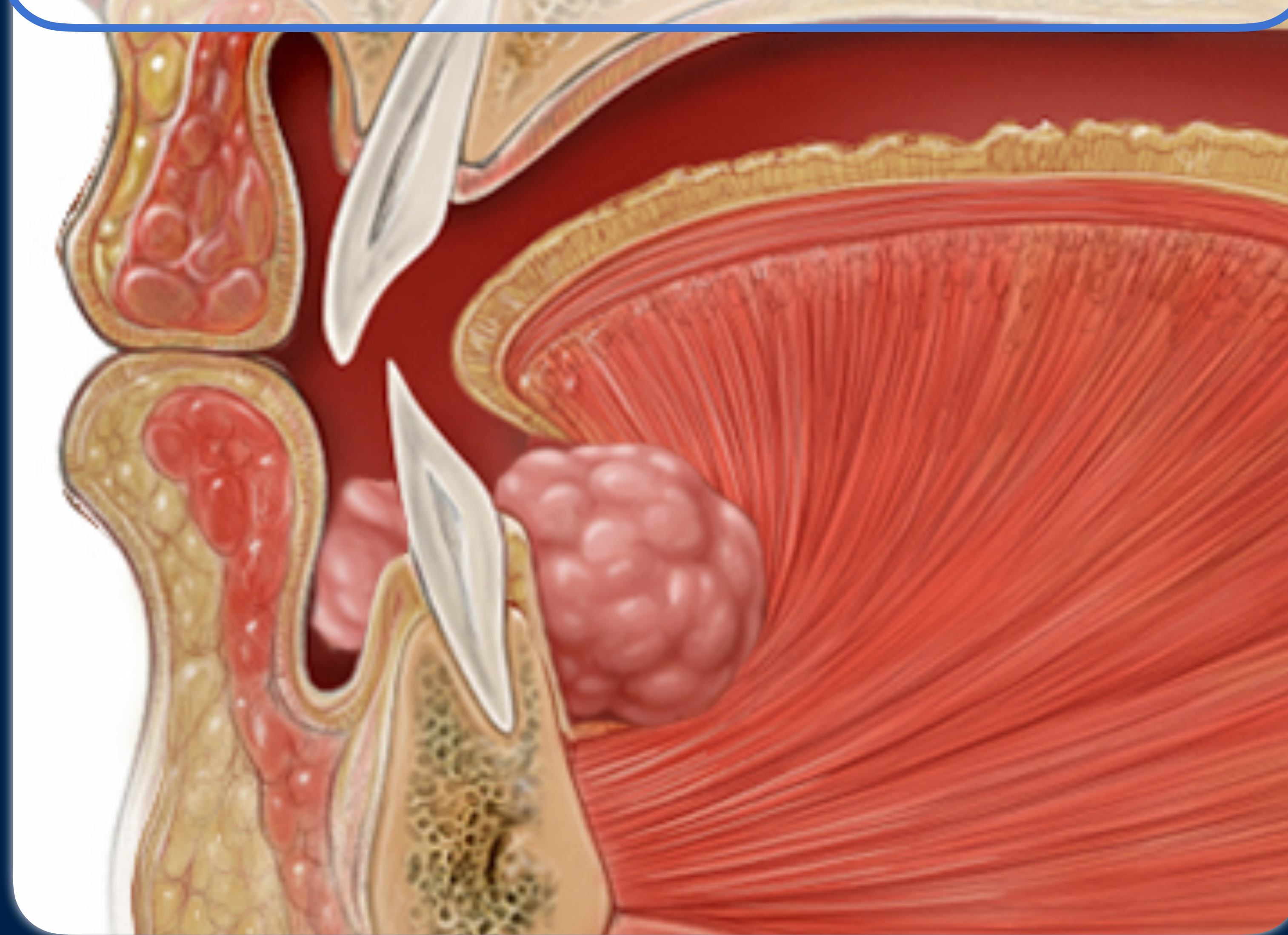
Pregnancy-Associated Fibrous Epulis

A Hidden Cause of Difficult Intubation

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Fibrous Epulis - a benign reactive hyperplasia of gingival connective tissue, hormonally sensitive, firm, pedunculated, non-ulcerated¹. Large lesions have rarely been reported to compromise the airway².

Fig 2: Sagittal schematic showing **posterior extension** of fibrous epulis beneath the anterior tongue



This is, to our knowledge, the first reported obstetric case of unexpected difficult videolaryngoscopy caused by sublingual extension of a fibrous epulis.

Case Report



18-year-old primigravida

Category 2 LSCS
Mallampati 3 with otherwise normal airway exam.
3 cm lower gingival lesion visible anterior to incisors.



High Spinal

(2.4 ml 0.5% bupivacaine/diamorphine).
Rapidly ascending block (dyspnoea, aphonia).
Emergency GA conversion.



Failed VL

(GlideScope Mac 3).
Unexpected posterior extension beneath tongue.
Restricted blade insertion, obscured view.
Failed intubation.



SpO₂ fell

Restored with **bag-mask ventilation**.
Repositioning → second attempt successful.
No bleeding from the lesion. Uneventful recovery.



Postop Review

Patient reported growth of lesion since it appeared in **early pregnancy**; not medically assessed.
Excised postpartum.
Histology: **fibrous epulis**.

Oral Lesions in Pregnancy

are common but their airway implications have received little attention in guidelines³

5%

prevalence of oral lesions in pregnancy⁴

T2 - T3

peak growth window
oestrogen-driven enlargement⁵

3 common types⁵

pyogenic granuloma •
fibrous epulis • hyperplasia

LEARNING POINTS

1

Ask
about gingival swellings

2

Inspect
the whole oral cavity

3

Consider
sublingual lesion/extension

4

Anticipate
restricted blade or bleeding

References:

[1] Chapple ILC. J Periodontol 2018;89:S74–84. [2] Fonseca GM. Int J Oral Sci 2013;6:182–4. [3] Mushambi MC. Anaesthesia 2015;70:1286–306. [4] Choudhary S. J Craniofac Surg 2005;16:319–21. [5] Pecci-Lloret MP. J Clin Med 2024;13:707.