Add Sucralfate to List of Aphthous Ulcer Treatments

Dear Cutis®:
I read with interest “Selecting Topical and Systemic Agents for Recurrent Aphthous Stomatitis” by Eisen and Lynch (Cutis 2001;68:201-206), but noticed that my preferred treatment was excluded from their list of agents. Specifically, I use sucralfate (Carafate® suspension), the aluminum subsalt of sucrose-8-sulphate, which has been used since 1968 as a mucoprotector for peptic ulcers. Patients are instructed to swish the substance for 45 to 60 seconds over the ulceration 6 times a day before swallowing. There is good support for this method of delivery with clinical resolution of aphthous ulcers in the medical literature.1-3

Sucralfate locally allows an ulcer-adherent complex with proteinaceous exudate to form at the site of the ulcer. Besides forming a physical barrier to further irritation, sucralfate binds to basic fibroblast growth factor preventing its degradation and thereby promoting healing.4 Accelerated ulcer healing by sucralfate also has been suggested to be the result of a rapid mucosal IL-4 generation leading to suppression of mucosal apoptotic events.5

Sincerely,
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REFERENCES