



Perioral (periorificial) Dermatitis

Definition

Perioral dermatitis is a skin disorder characterized by tiny red bumps (papules) around the mouth (and sometimes around nose and eyes).

Causes

Perioral dermatitis most commonly affects young women. However, it sometimes affects men, too. While its exact cause is unknown, it may appear after skin creams containing steroid are applied to the face.

Symptoms

Perioral dermatitis is usually characterized by an uncomfortable burning sensation around the mouth. Itching can also be a symptom.

In most cases, bumps and fluid- or pus-filled bumps are seen around the mouth. Sometimes a similar rash may appear around the eyes, nose, or forehead.

Treatment

Generally, skin creams containing steroids should not be used to treat perioral dermatitis. Your physician may choose to treat the bumps with other topical medications, such as metronidazole, tacrolimus, pimecrolimus, azelaic acid, clindamycin, erythromycin, or benzoyl peroxide. In many cases, oral antibiotics (such as tetracycline, doxycycline, minocycline, or erythromycin) may be required. You may consider at least temporarily trying a toothpaste without fluoride and without sodium lauryl sulfate (a Toms of Maine one is one option) as those ingredients on the skin may trigger perioral dermatitis in some people. If you use a steroid inhaler for asthma, that may trigger perioral dermatitis. In that case, do not stop your inhaler, but try to gently rinse off any steroid residue on skin after using inhaler.

Prognosis

Perioral dermatitis is a difficult condition to treat. It is often difficult to treat with topical medicine alone and often requires at least one month of oral treatment.