

PERLECHE

Perleche typically appears as a moist, red or white eruption between the skin folds at the corners of the mouth. There may be cracks or fissures and often it is sore or tender.

Cause:

Moisture has a tendency to collect between the skin folds especially in the corners of the mouth. This is more common if the individual has no teeth or poorly fitting dentures. Sometimes it is due to sagging skin in the elderly. The macerated skin is then easily infected with bacteria and yeast.

Significance:

For the typical healthy person perleche is a harmless disorder, but it can be uncomfortable. It is not related to cancer and it does not involve internal organs.

Treatment:

Treatment is often a topical anti-yeast/anti-fungal ointment or cream (like nystatin, clotrimazole or econazole). Sometimes a topical corticosteroid is used.

Treatment can often improve perleche, but unless the provoking factors are eliminated (moisture in the skin fold) repeat episodes will continue. Thus, plain Vaseline at night can be used to coat corners of mouth as prevention. Sometimes, a cosmetic treatment of having a dermal filler (like Restylane or Juvederm) injected by your dermatologist can be helpful to try to minimize the skin fold.