PATIENT
PERSPECTIVES

What is perioral dermatitis?

Perioral (or periorificial) dermatitis is a common rash on the face that can look like acne or rosacea. It happens mostly around the mouth, nose, and eyes.

WHAT CAUSES PERIORAL DERMATITIS?

We do not know what causes perioral dermatitis. Some things that can cause it are:

- **Steroid medicines** (these can be pills, creams you put on the skin, or inhalers).
- **High levels of normal skin germs,** like mites or yeast.

PERIORAL DERMATITIS FACTS

- This rash looks like many tiny pink or skin-colored bumps that come out around the mouth. The bumps can also show up around the nose and eyes.
- This rash can happen at any age and to all genders.
- The rash can sometimes cause itching or burning.
- Many kids with perioral dermatitis also have eczema or asthma. These kids may get perioral dermatitis because they need to use steroid medicines and have more sensitive skin.

HOW IS PERIORAL DERMATITIS DIAGNOSED?

Your doctor will know what this rash is by talking with you and looking at your skin. Tests are not needed most of the time.

HOW IS PERIORAL DERMATITIS TREATED?

There are many ways to treat this rash. You might need to try more than one medicine to find what works best. The rash can take 1-2 months to get better. If your child has used steroid cream on the face, the rash might look a little worse at first. Here are some ways to help:

1 Get Rid of Triggers:

- If you use steroid cream on your face, talk to your doctor about how to stop using it safely.
- If you need to take steroid pills or an inhaler for another reason, keep taking them.
- To protect your skin from steroid inhalers:
  - Put a layer of petroleum jelly around your mouth before using the mask or inhaler.
  - Wash the skin around your mouth right after using the inhaler.
  - Ask your doctor if you can switch from a mask to a mouthpiece for breathing in your medicine.

2 Topical Antibiotics:

- Some antibiotic creams work for this rash.
- Your doctor may want you to use one of these: metronidazole, clindamycin, erythromycin, sulfacetamide, or azelaic acid.

3 Anti-Inflammatory Medicines:

- Pimecrolimus cream and tacrolimus ointment help calm down inflammation in the skin.
- Some people feel stinging the first few times they use one of these creams, but this tends to go away over time.

4 Anti-Mite Medicines:

- Anti-mite creams like permethrin or ivermectin may be used to treat this rash.
- Some people have some skin peeling after using these medicines.

5 Antibiotics by Mouth:

- Some children have really bad perioral dermatitis. Sometimes, the rash does not get better with creams. In this case, a doctor may have their patient take an antibiotic by mouth.
- These medicines work because they help lower inflammation.
- Antibiotic options for young children are azithromycin, erythromycin, and clarithromycin. Kids older than 8 years can have doxycycline.

WHAT SHOULD BE EXPECTED AFTER TREATMENT?

It usually takes a few months for medicines to work on perioral dermatitis. Even after the rash clears with the right medicine, there is still a chance it could come back. Sometimes the creams need to be used longer to get results. Scars from the rash are not common. If the rash comes back, check in with your doctor and let them know.

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