

# Experts in Skin & Hair

## Patient Information Leaflet: Perioral Dermatitis

### What is Perioral Dermatitis?

Perioral dermatitis is a facial rash that typically appears around the mouth and nose. It is characterised by red, inflamed bumps, papules, pustules, and sometimes scaling or peeling. The condition is more common in women and can affect individuals of any age.

### Causes:

The exact cause of perioral dermatitis is not well understood, but several factors may contribute to its development. These include:

- **Topical Steroid Use:** The use of topical corticosteroids on the face is one of the most common triggers for perioral dermatitis.
- **Cosmetic Products:** Heavy creams, moisturisers, and certain facial products can irritate the skin and contribute to the condition.
- **Hormonal Changes:** Fluctuations in hormones, including during menstruation or due to oral contraceptives, can influence the development of perioral dermatitis.
- **Bacterial or Fungal Infections:** An imbalance of normal flora on the skin may play a role.
- **Skin Care Habits:** Aggressive scrubbing or over-washing the face can exacerbate the condition.

### Symptoms:

Common symptoms of perioral dermatitis include:

- Red, inflamed bumps or pustules around the mouth and nose.
- Itching, burning, or a stinging sensation in the affected areas.
- Possible scaling or dry skin surrounding the lesions.
- The rash may worsen with the use of certain cosmetic products or topical treatments.

### Diagnosis:

Perioral dermatitis is usually diagnosed through a physical examination of the affected areas by a dermatologist. A medical history review regarding skincare routines, medication use, and potential triggers is also essential. In some cases, a skin biopsy may be conducted to rule out other skin conditions.

### Management and Treatment:

Treatment of perioral dermatitis focuses on reducing inflammation, controlling symptoms, and identifying triggers. Options may include:

1. **Discontinuation of Topical Steroids:**
  - If topical corticosteroids have been used, gradually discontinuing their use under a healthcare provider's guidance is critical to allow the skin to heal.
2. **Topical Medications:**
  - **Antibiotic Creams:** Topical antibiotics like metronidazole or clindamycin may be prescribed to help reduce inflammation and bacteria.
  - **Azelaic Acid or Ivermectin Cream:** These may also be effective in treating perioral dermatitis.
  - **Non-steroid anti-inflammatory medications:** Calcineurin inhibitors like Pimecrolimus cream can be helpful in calming the inflammation.



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### 3. Oral Antibiotics:

- For more severe or persistent cases, oral antibiotics (such as doxycycline or tetracycline) may be prescribed for several weeks to help reduce inflammation and clear the rash.

### 4. Gentle Skin Care Regimen:

- Use mild, non-irritating cleansers and avoid heavy creams or makeup in the affected area. Stick to fragrance-free, hypoallergenic products.

### Self-Care and Lifestyle Tips:

- **Avoid Triggers:** Identify and avoid any skincare products or habits that exacerbate your symptoms, such as heavy creams, lotions, or topical steroids.
- **Maintain Good Hygiene:** Cleanse the affected area gently twice daily and avoid scrubbing or exfoliating harshly.
- **Don't Pick or Squeeze Lesions:** This can worsen inflammation and lead to secondary infections.

### When to Seek Medical Advice:

- If you suspect you have perioral dermatitis and over-the-counter options are not improving your symptoms.
- If the rash worsens or if you experience significant discomfort.

### Conclusion:

Perioral dermatitis is a manageable skin condition that may require time and patience to treat effectively. By working closely with your dermatologist, discontinuing any offending products, and following a gentle skincare regimen, most individuals experience significant improvement. For any questions or concerns regarding perioral dermatitis or its management, please consult your dermatologist for personalised advice.

