

PERIORIFICAL DERMATITIS

What is periorifical dermatitis?

Periorifical dermatitis is a fairly common skin condition that affects the skin around the mouth, nose and eyes. It is harmless but older children and teens can be bothered by the way it looks. It looks like small red bumps that are usually not itchy but can sometimes burn.

Most of the time, this comes and goes by itself and has no obvious trigger. However, for some children, it can be triggered by the use of topical corticosteroids (either as an ointment, cream or as an inhaled - if a spacer is used). It can be tempting to use topical steroids for this, as it will initially look better. However, the rash often worsens once the topical steroids are stopped.

How do you treat periorifical dermatitis?

In young children, because the rash is harmless and can fade with time, you do not need to treat. If topical steroids are used, you may need to slowly wean and/or expect the rash to temporarily get worse once these are stopped.

Topical therapies

Periorifical dermatitis can be treated with non-steroidal creams (like Elidel or Protopic), anti-rosacea creams (like Metrogel) or anti-mite creams (like permethrin or ivermectin).

Oral treatments

If the rash is quite bad or if topical treatments aren't working, the rash can be treated with a course of oral anti-rosacea medication. In children older than 12 years of age, doxycycline or minocycline are used. In children younger than 12 years of age, azithromycin, erythromycin or clarithromycin are used. These need to be used for about 8-12 weeks. Even if the rash responds, there is a chance it can come back and children may need re-treatment.

