

Angular Cheilitis

Angular cheilitis is a condition that causes red, swollen patches in the corners of your mouth where your lips meet and make an angle. Other names for it are perleche and angular stomatitis. You can get it on one side of your mouth or on both sides at the same time.

Symptoms

The main things you'll notice are irritation and soreness in the corner(s) of your mouth. One or both corners may be:

- ✓ Bleeding
- ✓ Blistered
- ✓ Cracked
- ✓ Crusty
- ✓ Itchy
- ✓ Painful
- ✓ Red
- ✓ Scaly
- ✓ Swollen

Your lips can feel dry and uncomfortable. Sometimes your lips and mouth can feel like they're burning. You also might have a bad taste in your mouth.

If the irritation is strong, it can make it hard for you to eat. You may not get enough nutrients or you may lose weight.

Causes

Saliva gets trapped and builds up in the corners of your mouth. When it dries, the skin in the area can crack. You may lick your lips often to soothe your cracked skin. The warmth and moisture in the corners of your mouth create the perfect conditions for fungus to grow and multiply -- and cause infection.

Fungal infection is the most common cause of angular cheilitis. It's usually caused by a type of yeast called *Candida*-- the same fungus that causes diaper rash in babies. Certain bacteria strains also can cause it. If your doctor can't find the cause, it's called idiopathic angular cheilitis.

Treatment

The goal is to clear out the infection and keep the area dry so your skin isn't infected again. Your doctor will recommend an antifungal cream to treat fungal infections.

If your infection is bacterial, your doctor will prescribe an antibacterial

medication.

If your angular cheilitis isn't caused by a fungal or bacterial infection, your doctor may suggest you put petroleum jelly on the inflamed areas. This protects your mouth from moisture so the sores can heal.

