

ANGULAR CHEILITIS

Angular cheilitis is a common skin problem. It appears as redness and cracks at the corners of the mouth. One or both sides of the mouth can be affected. Many people are told to assume this is a cold sore, but this is not the case as a true cold sore is a virus infection and does not occur at the corner of the mouth.

Angular cheilitis is derived from two different words. The term angular is an anatomical term denoting the corner of the mouth. The word cheilitis is a generic term referring to redness, swelling, cracking and scaling which occurs on the lip. Therefore this name described the redness and scaling at the corner of the mouth.

Angular cheilitis is a condition, which is related to the normal skin line that all of us have near the corner of the mouth. At times this line changes either with time or sun damage or significant dental work including dentures and/or orthodontics. The line at the corner of the mouth becomes slightly deeper and the saliva and/or normal germs in the mouth can get in the areas and produce the redness and swelling.

Fortunately there is treatment, which is quite effective in controlling the problem, but it is possible that the condition can return at certain times. In most cases two different topical treatments are used. The first is to control any yeast or bacteria infection, which has spread from the normal germs in the mouth. The second is to control the redness, swelling and soreness in the area. Both of the creams are used twice per day to the affected areas. It is easier to mix them in your palm and then apply to the area twice per day. As the condition improves, the creams can be used often and then finally stopped. If the condition would return then the creams can be restarted.

Angular cheilitis is not an indication of cancer or any internal medical problem. It is a minor skin irritation problem and normally can be controlled quite well with treatment. If you have any other questions regarding this condition, please don't hesitate to ask before you leave the office.