



## LIPS WITHOUT GLOSS

The lips are subject to constant exposure to sunlight and to materials that go inside the oral cavity. This is, in addition, to all of the cosmetics that are used and placed on them, especially by women.

The gloss or the lipstick, if of good quality, can avoid many problems:

- sun exposure that may lead to dryness, actinic cheilitis, leukoplakia and later lip cancer.
- allergic reactions leading to contact cheilitis.

## DRYNESS

Depending upon the quality of the gloss and/or the lipstick, it can produce dryness on the lip, but, on the other hand, if it has emollients it can protect the lip.

## CHEILITIS

**Contact cheilitis:** The lip is much more prone to develop contact allergy than the mucosa inside the mouth. A good gloss or lipstick will not produce contact cheilitis, which shows erythema, infiltration and inflammation, peeling with dryness, erosions, and crusts. Figure 1

**Actinic cheilitis:** This is an inflammatory reaction due to excessive or prolonged sun exposure. It only affects the lower lip, which becomes scaly, fissured, edematous, and red. The gloss with sunscreen will avoid this picture. Figure 2

## PRE MALIGNANT AND MALIGNANT LESIONS

Good quality gloss or lipstick with an emollient and sunscreen may prevent or postpone the onset of leukoplakia and cancer of the lip.

**Leukoplakia:** These are circumscribed areas of keratinization. They are whitish, well-defined small plaques that may appear on the lip, usually the lower lip. It is considered a pre-cancerous lesion and may evolve from actinic cheilitis and can also progress to squamous-cell carcinoma. Figure 3

## Cancer:

The lip is the most frequent region for the appearance of squamous cell carcinoma, especially the lower lip, which is more susceptible to sun exposure. These malignant lesions can be ulcers, vegetations, and whitish or red lesions that grow either slowly or rapidly. Some of them quickly affect the lymph nodes. Figure 4

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