

# Sore or dry lips

Dry or sore lips are a common problem, especially during hot or cold weather.

There are things you can try yourself that may help.

## Things you can try yourself

### Do

- ✓ use a lip balm that contains petroleum jelly or beeswax
- ✓ try different lip balms if one is not working well for you - you may be sensitive to some ingredients
- ✓ wash your hands before applying lip balm
- ✓ use a lip balm with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher during hot weather
- ✓ cover your lips when you're outside in cold weather
- ✓ drink plenty of water to avoid [dehydration](#)

### Don't

- ✗ do not pick or bite any flaky skin on your lips - this can slow down healing
- ✗ do not keep licking dry or cracked lips - this can make them sore
- ✗ do not share lip balms with other people - this can spread germs

## Common causes of sore or dry lips

Sore or dry lips can be caused by many things.

Common causes include:

- cold weather, dry air or wind
- damage from the sun
- dehydration
- a lip injury
- allergies

Sometimes they can be caused by a lack of vitamins and minerals.

If you have a small, fluid-filled blister on your lip, you may have a cold sore.

Most people with cold sores get a tingling, burning or itching feeling on their lip before the blister appears.

Check if it's a cold sore and read [how to treat them](#).

## A pharmacist can help with sore or dry lips

A pharmacist will tell you about the best treatments for dry or sore lips and if you need to see your GP.

You can buy lip balm containing petroleum jelly or beeswax from a pharmacist.

### Contact a GP if:

- your lips are hot, painful, red and swollen - this could be a sign of infection

Your GP may prescribe an antibiotic or antifungal cream if you have an infected lip.

Content supplied by the [NHS](#) and adapted for Ireland by the HSE

# Sláintecare.

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