

Vitamin B2 Deficiency

by George E. Meinig, DDS, FACD

Frequent cracks in the lips and at the corners of the mouth may be caused by a rather common nutritional deficiency technically called cheilosis or angular stomatitis. It is caused by a lack of riboflavin (B2).

This vitamin is lost in the refining of grain, exposure of food to sunlight, and some of it is lost by heating food and when it is in alkaline solutions sodium bicarbonate used in baking is also detrimental. Good eating sources are organ meats such as liver, kidney and heart, poultry, fish, green leafed vegetables, nuts, fruit, legumes, dairy products and eggs.

When the corners of the mouth are cracked it is common to see that skin and eyes are also often involved with deficiencies of B2. A good diet including foods above mentioned plus a supplement of B complex is recommended, inasmuch as all of the B vitamins have interlocking functions. Individuals wearing artificial dentures often have continual shrinkage of their gums. This gradually causes an overclosure of the jaws. Saliva then collects at the corners of the mouth and many then develop similar cracks in their lips. This is not a vitamin B2 deficiency but of course both things could exist at the same time.