

COURTNEY SOMMA
Vitality Holistic Health and Wellness

Healing Peri-Oral Dermatitis **NATURALLY**

The last guide you'll ever need to finally heal your PD,
eczema, psoriasis, and other skin conditions.



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I hope you find this guide to be valuable and helpful on your journey. That being said, when dealing with chronic conditions or nutritional and lifestyle change, sometimes we need some guidance, support, and accountability. **If you'd like to connect to discuss whether or not Vitality can offer you the one on one support that you need, please reach out to me via email or feel free to complete the client application and book your free one hour consultation today!**

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<https://www.vitalityholistichw.com/book>

Check out the website for more information as well as my favorite reads, products, and helpful information!

More about your coach: Mama of two boys, lover of all things country music, concerts, the mountains, and sunshine.

Credentials: B.S. Biology, Certified: Health and Wellness Coach, Holistic Nutritionist, Sports Nutrition Coach, Personal Trainer. National board certification via the NB-HWC pending completion fall 2025.

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Introduction: My personal experience with PD

My history with PD began around 2016, after the birth of my first son. I developed the embarrassing mystery rash around my nose and mouth seemingly overnight. I remember being so self-conscious about it, but I could not for the life of me understand where the heck it came from!

Finally in 2017, my PCP diagnosed me with PD and I began the journey of topicals and medications. At this point, I had not launched into my healing journey and I had no clue where this stemmed from. I wanted the meds and I wanted this thing GONE. Little did I know that this rash would be part of my life for the next seven or so years.

I tried all of the topicals and followed all of the dermatologists advice. Nothing worked. I paid hundreds for a healing PD course (that didn't work) and I put baby butt cream on my face.. Yes.. I was smearing straight up ass cream on my face. Anything that worked was only effective short-term and it would come back with a vengeance. Every time I tried something new, the angry red beast on my face came back nastier than ever.

WHAT. THE. HECK!?

I didn't want to leave my house. I could try to cover it up but makeup and face wash burned. Most of the time, the rash could still be seen. During the summer, out at the pool without makeup, I would not take my floppy hat and sunglasses off... feeling as if I would hide under them and no one would be able to tell.. SHHHH!

It was really cramping my style.

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While all of this was happening, my migraine attacks were getting worse and I was trying to get to the bottom of that issue. It took several years, but I went from conventional western medicine, to naturopaths, and then finally embarked on my own healing journey using all of the information that I had acquired up to that point. A lot of it I had to completely unlearn.

You see, no topical was ever going to rid me of this nuisance because this was an inside job. The ugly rash on my face was my body saying "HEY! I NEED SOME HELP IN HERE!"

In October 2023, after nearly 11 months of researching whole-food plant-based nutrition for migraine, I pulled the trigger and went completely plant-based by January 1st, 2024.

Within weeks, the eight year battle I had with peri-oral/peri-ocular dermatitis was over. A completely unintentional but oh so refreshing by product of trying to heal from chronic migraine.

My skin was clear. ALAS! I have my face back! It is currently April 2025... and I have not had a flare since.

If you want to rid yourself of PD for good, this one's for you!

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Chapter 1: Understanding Peri-Oral Dermatitis

Peri-oral dermatitis is a facial rash that most commonly appears around the mouth, nose, and sometimes the eyes. It often looks like red bumps, dry patches, or a scaly rash, and it can be itchy, painful, or just stubbornly persistent. It can feel like acne, eczema, and rosacea rolled into one—and it doesn't always respond well to typical skin treatments.

Common triggers include:

- Topical steroids (often initially prescribed for the rash, but can worsen it over time)
- Harsh or irritating skincare products, especially those with synthetic fragrances, alcohol, or SLS
- Hormonal imbalances, especially in women
- Stress
- Fluoride-containing toothpaste or mouthwash
- Weather extremes or overuse of facial products
- Caffeine

***Note: Triggers are not root causes.** The root cause of PD can be multi-factorial but often includes gut dysbiosis, chronic low grade infections (viral, bacterial, fungal), an overburdened liver, and even toxic heavy metals.

Many people find themselves in a cycle—using creams that provide short-term relief, only to experience a rebound flare once they stop. This cycle can feel defeating, but it's often a sign that the root cause hasn't been addressed.

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The skin is a reflection of what's happening inside. When there's inflammation in the gut, hormonal disruption, or imbalance in the microbiome, it can show up on the surface—especially around the mouth and nose, where the skin is more sensitive. Healing starts with awareness and education. Once we understand the bigger picture, we can take empowered steps forward.

Chapter 2: Why Conventional Treatments Often Fail

Most conventional treatments focus on suppressing the symptoms of peri-oral dermatitis using topical steroids or oral antibiotics. While these treatments may offer temporary relief, they often do not address the underlying issues that caused the skin to react in the first place.

Topical steroids can thin the skin over time and lead to a dependency cycle. What begins as a small patch of irritation can become a larger, more inflamed area when the steroid is discontinued—this is called a rebound flare.

Antibiotics, especially long-term, can disrupt the delicate balance of your gut microbiome, leading to digestive issues, immune suppression, and increased sensitivity. While they may calm symptoms, the root imbalances often remain untouched.

In some cases, people are told their condition is “chronic” and that they may need to manage it for life. But with a holistic, nutrition-focused approach, it's absolutely possible to achieve long-term healing without relying on harsh medications.

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The key is addressing root causes: inflammation, gut health, liver function, and immune balance. True healing happens from within.

Chapter 3: Healing from the Inside Out

Your skin is your body's largest detox organ. It reflects your internal health—especially your gut, liver, and immune system. When any of these systems are stressed or imbalanced, your skin often sends a signal.

Gut health is central. A compromised gut lining (a condition often referred to as “leaky gut”) can allow food particles, toxins, and bacteria to enter the bloodstream, triggering inflammation that shows up in the skin. An imbalanced gut microbiome can also increase skin sensitivity and reduce the absorption of nutrients essential for skin repair.

The liver plays a vital role in detoxification. When the liver is overburdened by processed foods, toxins, alcohol, or medications, the skin may pick up the slack—leading to skin rashes, flare-ups, and inflammation.

The immune system, when chronically activated by poor nutrition, stress, or gut dysbiosis, can mistakenly attack healthy skin cells, leading to rashes and irritation.

To truly heal peri-oral dermatitis, we must:

- Restore gut integrity with fiber-rich, healing foods
- Reduce inflammatory foods and environmental toxins
- Support the liver with detoxifying plants
- Provide the nutrients the skin needs to rebuild

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This is a whole-body approach—and it's both powerful and sustainable.

Chapter 4: The Power of Whole-Food, Plant-Based Nutrition

A whole-food, plant-based (WFPB) diet is centered on eating foods in their most natural, unprocessed state: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds. This way of eating floods the body with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fiber—all of which are essential for skin repair and immune regulation.

Benefits for skin health include:

- **Anti-inflammatory effects** from colorful plant foods rich in polyphenols
- **Gut healing** from high-fiber foods that feed beneficial bacteria
- **Liver detox support** from cruciferous vegetables and leafy greens
- **Hydration** from water-rich fruits and vegetables
- **Natural hormone balancing** from fiber and phytoestrogens

Unlike elimination diets that can feel restrictive, WFPB eating is abundant. You're not starving or cutting calories—you're nourishing every cell in your body, especially your skin.

This diet is free from common inflammatory foods like dairy, processed sugar, and refined oils, all of which can disrupt gut health and contribute to skin issues. Within weeks, many people notice improved digestion, reduced inflammation, and a visible glow in their skin.

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Chapter 5: Foods to Embrace

The goal is to crowd your plate with healing, nutrient-dense foods. Here's what to prioritize:

- **Leafy greens:** Spinach, kale, romaine, arugula – rich in chlorophyll and skin-renewing nutrients
- **Berries:** Blueberries, strawberries, blackberries – full of antioxidants that protect skin cells
- **Sweet potatoes:** Packed with beta-carotene and fiber to reduce inflammation
- **Avocados:** A source of healthy fats and vitamin E for skin elasticity
- **Ground flaxseeds:** Anti-inflammatory omega-3s and fiber for hormone balance
- **Cucumbers and celery:** Hydrating, alkalizing, and gentle on digestion
- **Cruciferous vegetables:** Broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage – support detox pathways
- **Herbs:** Cilantro and parsley help bind and eliminate toxins from the body
- **Legumes** like lentils, chickpeas, and black beans are excellent for gut health and support hormone balance, which is especially important for women experiencing hormonal skin flares.
- **Whole grains like quinoa, brown rice, oats, and millet** provide slow-burning energy and additional fiber to stabilize blood sugar.
- **Fruit, fruit, and more fruit!!** Saving the most important for last. Fruit is chalk full of antioxidants that fight free radicals and reduces inflammation. Fruit hydrates every cell in the body, including the skin! Fiber in fruit helps the body to eliminate unwanted matter.

Eating a rainbow of plants ensures you get the full spectrum of nutrients your skin craves.

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There are a lot of fad diets and myths out there that advocate for low carb, low fiber, and low fruit diets. Not only are these unsustainable, but it is generally terrible advice for overall health and there are hundreds of years of research on this. In order to heal the gut and furthermore heal the skin, an abundance of fruits, leafy greens, and starchy vegetables are crucial!

Do not fear the gift from the ground that have been given to us. These foods are healing and you can eat them in abundance AND save your skin.

Chapter 6: Foods to Avoid

While it's important to focus on what to add, it's equally essential to remove the foods that may be irritating your system and contributing to skin flares.

Common skin irritants to avoid:

- **Dairy:** Highly inflammatory and often linked to hormonal disruptions
- **Gluten:** Can cause inflammation in sensitive individuals or those with leaky gut
- **Corn and soy:** I am not against corn and soy, but they are heavily modified and heavily sprayed with pesticides and herbicides. They are also common allergens and can cause flares in sensitive people, even if no other symptoms are present. It is best to remove these when attempting to treat PD.
- **Refined sugar:** Feeds bad gut bacteria, spikes blood sugar, and increases inflammation. We're taking added sugar here, not fruit and starchy vegetables, folks!

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- **Eggs:** Eggs cause flares for so many, for multiple reasons. Touted as a nutritious powerhouse, eggs do have nutritional value... but this is meant for baby chicks. The fat in eggs, especially when eaten in the morning, forces the liver to work with the gallbladder to digest fats rather than clean house. Additionally, many people have an egg sensitivity that they may not even feel but can be shown on an IgG test. For me, My egg sensitivity was sky high but I never put two and two together until after taking a food sensitivity test. I have mixed feelings about these tests, but I started paying attention. Within 24 hours of eating eggs, I would break out in a full-blown PD flare. The eggs had to go. Eggs are also used in specific pharmaceutical products and in laboratories as a medium to fuel pathogens, which, in turn, causes inflammation in our bodies when we eat them.
- **Animal products:** This is another controversial suggestion. At the end of the day, as healthy as I thought I was eating and as fit as I was, my PD, migraine, and other mystery symptoms continued to get worse. I was eating a clean meat! Highly organic. Lots of vegetables. Low carb. What so many "health gurus" and "influencers" are touting these days! The sad truth is that animal products are high in arachidonic acid (AA), a pro-inflammatory omega-6 fatty acid. AA activates the inflammatory pathways in the body and, as long as there are more omega-6s in the body, that pathway will be favored over the omega-3 anti-inflammatory pathway. Having been on this journey for a few years now, I have seen hundreds of women who's skin would not clear up until they finally ditched the animal products. Myself included.
- **Oils (even "healthy" ones):** Concentrated fats that can hinder digestion and clog pores

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- **Processed foods:** Full of preservatives, additives, and emulsifiers that disrupt gut health
- **Caffeine and alcohol:** Dehydrate the skin and tax the liver, making flare-ups more likely
- **Artificial sweeteners:** Can alter gut flora and trigger immune responses

Even “natural” snacks and health foods can contain ingredients like seed oils or added sugars that sneak past the radar. Read labels carefully, and when in doubt—stick to whole, real food.

Eliminating these foods for at least 21–30 days gives the body a chance to reset and recalibrate.

Chapter 7: Lifestyle Practices That Support Healing

Healing skin isn’t just about what you eat—it’s also about how you live, think, and care for your body.

Skincare tips:

- Switch to simple, non-irritating products with minimal ingredients
- Use the YUKA app or the EWG skin deep database
- Avoid exfoliants, retinoids, or harsh active ingredients during a flare
- Use lukewarm water—not hot—and gently pat your face dry
- Try natural alternatives like diluted apple cider vinegar or calendula water

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Daily habits that support clear skin:

- Practice daily mindfulness or meditation to reduce stress hormones
- Move your body gently every day (yoga, walking, stretching)
- Prioritize 7–9 hours of restorative sleep per night
- Hydrate with at least 2 liters of filtered water daily
- Breathe deeply and intentionally—oxygen supports healing

The nervous system plays a huge role in skin health. Chronic stress can lead to immune dysregulation, inflammation, and impaired skin barrier function. Learning to calm your body helps everything heal more effectively.

Chapter 8: Real Stories of Healing

Hearing how others have healed can provide hope and inspiration. These are not overnight transformations—they are stories of consistency, patience, and plant-powered progress.

“I struggled with peri-oral dermatitis for over a year. It wasn’t until I switched to a whole-food, plant-based lifestyle that things started to shift. Within three weeks, the redness faded. Within six, it was gone. Now, I just eat the way my body loves, and my skin is clear.” – Alina R.

“I thought I’d have to live with the flare-ups forever. But changing my food changed everything. I removed dairy, gluten, and sugar, and added in more greens, berries, and sweet potatoes. No more creams, no more antibiotics—just real, healing nourishment.” – Joy C.

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“What helped me most was realizing that this wasn’t just about my skin—it was about my gut, my stress levels, and how I took care of myself every day. Meditation, lemon water, and simple meals gave me my confidence back.” – Talia M.

Everyone’s path to healing looks a little different. But the common thread is always nourishment, self-care, and listening deeply to what the body needs.

Chapter 10: Supplements and Natural Topicals

Supplements can be a gentle and supportive addition to your healing plan, but they’re most effective when paired with foundational lifestyle and nutritional changes.

Helpful supplements:

- **Zinc:** Supports skin repair and immune function. Look for zinc picolinate or zinc citrate.
- **Vitamin B12:** Essential for nerve and skin health, especially important for those on a plant-based diet.
- **Omega-3s (from algae oil or chia seeds):** Help reduce inflammation and support skin hydration.
- **Probiotics:** Can help restore gut flora, especially after antibiotic use. Choose soil-based or dairy-free blends.
- **Vitamin D3:** Many people are deficient. Vitamin D is critical for immune regulation and skin health.
- **Magnesium:** Supports stress reduction, hormonal balance, and cellular repair.

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Chapter 11: Staying Clear Long-Term

Once your skin clears, the journey doesn't end—it simply evolves into maintenance and deeper body awareness.

To keep your skin clear long-term:

- Stick to a consistent, nourishing plant-based diet
- Limit or avoid reintroducing known trigger foods like dairy and gluten
- Continue drinking plenty of water and incorporating greens daily
- Support your liver regularly with herbs like dandelion, milk thistle, or lemon water
- Maintain a simple skincare routine with non-toxic, fragrance-free products
- Get regular movement and sunlight
- Keep stress in check with breathwork, journaling, or nature time

Flare-ups may still happen occasionally—but with the tools you've gained, you'll know exactly how to respond with confidence and calm.

Chapter 12: How to Handle Future Flare-Ups

Healing is not always linear. Life happens—travel, stress, a change in products or diet. If you experience a flare-up:

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- **Go back to your reset plan.** Remove potential triggers and go back to simple, anti-inflammatory meals.
- **Increase hydration.** Drink herbal teas, water with lemon, and add water-rich foods like cucumbers and melons.
- **Rest and decompress.** Stress is often a silent trigger. Slow down and create space for restoration.
- **Avoid harsh treatments.** Let your skin breathe, and support it gently.
- **Detox your environment.** Check for new skincare, household cleaners, or toothpaste that could be irritating.

Flare-ups aren't failures—they're invitations to pause, tune in, and realign. The more you listen to your body, the fewer and milder they'll become.

Your Skin Is a Messenger. Your Body Is Ready to Heal.

This journey isn't about perfection. It's about giving your body the love, nourishment, and support it needs to come back into balance. You're not broken—you're healing. And we're honored to walk this path with you.

With love and vitality,

Courtney Somma

Vitality Holistic Health and Wellness, LLC

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7-Day Whole-Food, Plant-Based Meal Plan (No Added Salt, Oil, or Refined Sugar)

Day 1

- **Breakfast:** Oatmeal with sliced banana, blueberries, ground flaxseed, and cinnamon
- **Lunch:** Sweet potato and black bean bowl with steamed kale and avocado-lime dressing
- **Dinner:** Lentil and vegetable stew with brown rice
- **Snack:** Apple slices with unsweetened almond butter

Day 2

- **Breakfast:** Chia pudding with unsweetened almond milk, berries, and date puree
- **Lunch:** Hummus and veggie wrap in a whole wheat tortilla with a side of fruit
- **Dinner:** Baked potatoes topped with steamed broccoli, nutritional yeast, and chickpeas
- **Snack:** Carrot sticks and no-oil hummus

Day 3

- **Breakfast:** Green smoothie with spinach, mango, banana, ground flaxseed, and water
- **Lunch:** Quinoa salad with cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, chickpeas, and lemon-tahini dressing
- **Dinner:** Oil-free stir fry with tofu, mixed veggies, and brown rice
- **Snack:** Unsweetened applesauce with a sprinkle of cinnamon

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Day 4

- **Breakfast:** Warm buckwheat cereal with dates, walnuts, and cinnamon
- **Lunch:** Creamy red lentil soup and a large green salad with balsamic vinegar
- **Dinner:** Stuffed bell peppers with rice, black beans, corn, and herbs
- **Snack:** Celery with avocado mash

Day 5

- **Breakfast:** Overnight oats with grated apple, raisins, chia seeds, and cinnamon
- **Lunch:** Buddha bowl with roasted chickpeas, quinoa, steamed greens, and tahini drizzle
- **Dinner:** Spaghetti squash with homemade oil-free marinara and white beans
- **Snack:** Frozen banana bites dipped in date syrup

Day 6

- **Breakfast:** Millet porridge with peaches, sunflower seeds, and almond milk
- **Lunch:** Mashed sweet potato and lentil patties with mixed greens
- **Dinner:** Vegetable curry with cauliflower, potatoes, peas, and brown rice
- **Snack:** Sliced cucumber and radishes with lemon juice and herbs

Day 7

- **Breakfast:** Whole grain toast with mashed avocado and tomato slices
- **Lunch:** Chickpea "tuna" salad lettuce wraps with chopped veggies
- **Dinner:** Mushroom and spinach quinoa risotto
- **Snack:** Date and oat energy balls (blended dates, oats, and cinnamon)

Chapter 9: Recipes for the 7-Day Meal Plan

Oatmeal with Banana and Blueberries

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup water or unsweetened almond milk
- 1 banana, sliced
- 1/2 cup blueberries (fresh or frozen)
- 1 tbsp ground flaxseed
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon

Instructions:

1. Cook oats in water or almond milk over medium heat until thickened.
2. Stir in flaxseed and cinnamon.
3. Top with banana and blueberries.

Sweet Potato and Black Bean Bowl

Ingredients:

- 1 medium sweet potato, cubed and roasted
- 1/2 cup cooked black beans
- 1 cup steamed kale
- Juice of 1/2 lime
- 1/4 avocado, mashed

Instructions:

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1. Roast sweet potatoes at 400°F (200°C) for 25–30 minutes.
2. Steam kale for 5 minutes.
3. Assemble bowl with all ingredients and mash avocado with lime for dressing.

Lentil and Vegetable Stew

Ingredients:

- 1 cup green or brown lentils
- 1 diced onion
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 zucchini, chopped
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 4 cups vegetable broth (no added salt)
- 1 tsp thyme, 1 tsp oregano

Instructions:

1. Sauté onion, carrot, and celery in a splash of water.
2. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 30–40 minutes.

Chia Pudding

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk
- 1/2 cup berries
- 1 tbsp date puree

Instructions:

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1. Mix chia seeds with almond milk and date puree.
2. Refrigerate overnight. Top with berries before serving.

Oil-Free Hummus

Ingredients:

- 1 can chickpeas (rinsed)
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 1 garlic clove
- 1/4 cup water (as needed for texture) **Instructions:**

1. Blend all ingredients until smooth.

Quinoa Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cucumber, diced
- 1/2 cup cooked chickpeas
- 1 tbsp tahini + 1 tbsp lemon juice + water to thin **Instructions:**

1. Mix all ingredients and drizzle with tahini-lemon dressing.

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Date and Oat Energy Balls

Ingredients:

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup pitted dates
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon

Instructions:

1. Blend oats and dates in a food processor.
2. Roll into balls and refrigerate.

Note to readers:

Information contained in this guide should not replace medical advice. Vitality Holistic Health and Wellness, LLC information cannot diagnose, cure, or treat medical conditions. Information is meant to provide insight only. Please consult a medical professional before making any dietary, movement, supplemental, medicinal, or lifestyle changes. Vitality Holistic Health and Wellness, LLC will not be held liable for any damages, real or perceived, incurred by reading or not reading the information contained in this ebook.