

## Chinchilla Gets Sore On Inside Lower Lip

**A lesion collects hair and dust and impairs a chinchilla's eating.**

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**Q:** I have a 4-year-old, un-neutered, male chinchilla. About six months ago, he started to develop what appeared to be a sore on the inside of his bottom lip. Food and hair would collect on the sore creating a large, hard scab on his lip. This prevented him from eating properly. I have had him to the vet four times in six months for this. They remove the scab, which is very painful for him, and then medicate the area, but it keeps coming back. At first, we thought he was hurting himself on something inside his cage. He has been in the same cage ever since I got him at 2 months of age, and this never happened to him until recently. This last time I had him at the vet they took a biopsy of his lip because I believe something else is going on. He is not eating well because of this condition. Also he seems to collect hair around his bottom teeth, which I think is adding to the problem.

He doesn't trust me now because of all the things I have had to do to him; so on top of having to medicate him and constantly remove the scab, I have to chase him around the cage to catch him. He wants nothing to do with me anymore. I really can't handle the stress and worry this is causing me. I love my little guy so much this is tearing me apart, not to mention the fact that I am just about torturing my chinchilla to death. Please help me!

**A:** This sounds like a sad situation. I agree that with many of our small mammals, we have to be careful about medications and what we do to them. We can so easily lose the trust that we have gained over the years with them.

My advice is to do what you have already done, obtain a biopsy of this unusual lesion. Your doctor has done that. What do the results show? If you are not satisfied with the answers you receive, ask your doctor to speak with a pathologist who specializes in analyzing tissue samples. Once you have the biopsy results back, you can make an informed decision on the best way to treat your chinchilla.