



Overview of Rosacea

Rosacea (ro-ZAY-she-ah) is a chronic (or long-term) disease that causes reddened skin and pimples, usually on the face. It can cause eye problems and, in advanced stages, cause thicker skin. Although there is no cure for rosacea, treatments are available to help make your skin look and feel better.

Who Gets Rosacea?

Rosacea most often affects middle-aged and older adults. It is more common in women (particularly during menopause) than men. Although rosacea can develop in people of any skin color, it tends to occur most frequently and is most apparent in people with fair skin.

Symptoms of Rosacea

Rosacea usually causes your face to become flushed, or red, frequently. This usually occurs around the center of your face, including your forehead, nose, cheeks, and chin. Your skin may also feel swollen or burning, especially when you put on cosmetics. In advanced stages, your skin may become thicker. Rosacea almost always affects the face; other parts of the upper body are only rarely affected.

A condition called vascular rosacea causes persistent redness. Blood vessels under your skin may become larger and show through the skin as small red lines. This is called telangiectasia (tel-AN-je-ek-tay-ze-ah). Inflammatory rosacea causes redness and papules, or pink bumps, and pustules, or pus-filled bumps, on your skin.

In advanced stages of rosacea, you may have both vascular and inflammatory rosacea. Your skin may become thicker and more painful. A condition called rhinophyma may cause the oil-producing glands in the skin of your nose to become enlarged, making your nose appear larger, bulbous and red. Rhinophyma is more common in men and rarely affects women.

Rosacea can also cause eye problems. Your eyes may become red, dry, itchy, burning or watery, or it may feel like you have sand in your eye. Your eyelids can become inflamed and swollen. You may also have blurred vision or some other kind of vision problem or be more sensitive to light.

Causes of Rosacea

Doctors don't know what causes rosacea, but some people may inherit a tendency to develop the disease. Some researchers believe it is caused by blood vessels that dilate, or expand, too easily, causing flushing and redness. It may also be more common among people who blush frequently.

Treatment of Rosacea

There is no cure for rosacea, but treatment can help make your skin look and feel better. Your doctor may suggest antibiotic medicines that you apply directly on your skin or take in a pill. It may take several weeks or months for your skin to start looking better.

Other skin treatments may include:

- Gels to help your skin look less red.
- Electrosurgery or laser surgery to reduce the appearance of small red lines on your skin.
- If your nose is bumpy and swollen, you may be able to have some extra skin tissue taken off to make it smaller.

Treatments for eye problems may include:

- Medicines, such as steroid eye drops.
- Cleaning your eyelids to reduce infections. Your doctor may recommend scrubbing your eyelids gently with watered-down baby shampoo or an eyelid cleaner and then applying a warm (but not hot) compress a few times a day.

Be sure to talk about treatments and possible side effects with your doctor.

Who Treats Rosacea?

Diagnosing and treating rosacea requires a team effort involving you and health care professionals. These may include dermatologists, who treat skin problems.

Living With Rosacea

Health care professionals can prescribe or recommend treatments to help you manage your rosacea, but there are also some things you can try that may reduce your symptoms. Here are some things that may help you:

- Keep a written record of when flares, or periods of worse symptoms, occur. This may help you and your doctors figure out what irritates your skin.
- Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher every day, especially if sun irritates your skin. Use a sunscreen that protects against UVA and UVB rays, two types of ultraviolet rays that can harm your skin.
- Use a mild lubricant on your face if it helps, but avoid any products that irritate your skin.
- Green-tinted makeup may help conceal skin redness.
- Talk to a doctor if you feel sad or have other signs of depression. Some people with rosacea feel bad because of the way their skin looks and may need treatment for depression.

Some things can make your rosacea become worse, or flare, but what seems to trigger a flare varies from person to person. Although these factors have not been well-researched, some people say these things make their rosacea worse:

- Heat, including hot baths.
- Exercise.
- Sunlight.
- Wind.
- Very cold temperatures.
- Hot or spicy foods and drinks.
- Alcohol.
- Menopause.
- Emotional stress.
- Long-term use of steroids on the skin.
- Bacteria.

Research Progress Related to **Rosacea**

Researchers funded by the NIAMS and the National Institutes of Health continue to study possible causes of rosacea and treatments. Some researchers have found that some people with rosacea have high levels of chemicals that cause inflammation in their skin. Other researchers are studying compounds that protect the skin from infections.

For More Info

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Toll free: 888-INFO-FDA (888-463-6332)

Website: <https://www.fda.gov>

Drugs@FDA at <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/daf> Drugs@FDA is a searchable catalog of FDA-approved drug products.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics

Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs>

American Academy of Dermatology

Website: <https://www.aad.org>

National Rosacea Society

Website: <https://www.rosacea.org>

If you need more information about available resources in your language or other languages, please visit our webpages below or contact the NIAMS Information Clearinghouse at NIAMSInfo@mail.nih.gov.

- [Asian Language Health Information](#)
- [Spanish Language Health Information](#)