

MANAGING YOUR ROSACEA

What Is Rosacea?

Rosacea, which is also called acne rosacea or adult acne, is a condition with chronic redness of the facial skin, easy flushing, and sometimes acne-like breakouts. Women are more likely to show symptoms on the chin and cheeks, whereas in men the nose is commonly involved.

Rosacea is most common during or after middle age and is often called adult acne. People of northern European descent and those with fair complexions are more likely to have rosacea. It's treatable but usually not curable.

What Causes Rosacea?

The cause is unknown. Alcohol, hot beverages, and certain foods do not cause it but can make it worse. Rosacea may run in families.

What are the Symptoms of Rosacea?

The skin of the nose, cheeks, chin, and forehead is affected. Redness, swelling, and pimples or pustules appear on the skin. Small blood vessels under the skin can get bigger and noticeable.

They look like thin red lines on the face or nose. Skin can become oily. In more severe cases, larger bumps on the nose occur. Rarely, eyes and eyelids are affected, with swelling, redness, dry eyes, and burning.

Rosacea has three stages, each with different symptoms. Early symptoms include flushing or redness that comes and goes. Spicy food, sunlight, or alcohol can trigger these. Middle stage symptoms are the same but last longer. Skin may burn or sting, and eyes feel itchy or gritty. In the advanced stage, redness becomes permanent, small and sometimes painful pimples may

appear, skin may burn or sting, eyes may be watery and irritated, and the nose can become red and swollen.

Because their skin looks similar to that of chronic alcohol abusers, people with rosacea are often thought of as being closet alcoholics. This isn't true.

How Is Rosacea Diagnosed?

The health care provider makes a diagnosis from the physical examination.

How Is Rosacea Treated?

Mild cases can sometimes be treated with a topical antibiotic cream (metronidazole, clindamycin, erythromycin) or antibiotics taken by mouth. Rosacea often returns and may need a smaller dose of medicine taken regularly to control symptoms. Early treatment may slow disease progress. In more severe cases, a combination of medicines may be needed. Severe nose swelling in rare cases needs surgery, but laser treatment may help. A laser is sometimes used for large veins and redness. The health care provider will usually suggest seeing a dermatologist (specialist in skin diseases).

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Rosacea

- ✓ **DO** wash your face twice a day with a washcloth and mild soap.
- ✓ **DO** follow your doctor's instructions about soaps, sunscreens, and medicines. Early treatment may prevent some long-term effects.
- ✓ **DO** keep a diary of activities performed, kinds of foods eaten, and personal care items used when a flare-up occurs to see whether you can find a pattern. For example, if your

skin becomes irritated and red when you eat chili peppers, they probably trigger symptoms.

✓ **DO** change to milder soap or skin creams that don't contain perfumes, alcohol, or harsh additives, to minimize skin irritation.

✓ **DO** call your health care provider if you have symptoms involving your eyes or eyelids.

✓ **DO** call your health care provider if treatment isn't helping after 3 or 4 weeks.

⊗ **DON'T** eat foods that make rosacea worse. These may include hot liquids and spicy foods, chocolates, cheeses, nuts, iodized salt, and seafood.

⊗ **DON'T** drink alcohol.

⊗ **DON'T** get exposed to sun without sunscreen and avoid extreme heat and cold.

⊗ **DON'T** drink hot beverages.

FROM THE DESK OF

NOTES

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

- National Rosacea Society: Tel: (888) NO-BLUSH (662-5874); Website:
<http://www.rosacea.org>
- American Academy of Dermatology: Tel: (847) 330-0230, (866) 503-7546; Website:
<http://aad.org>

Copyright © 2021 by Elsevier, Inc.