



## ROSACEA INFORMATION

Rosacea is a chronic, but treatable inflammatory condition of the skin of the central face that is characterized by flares and remissions. It affects more than 16 million Americans. People of all skin types are affected, but fair skinned individuals who blush and flush are most susceptible. Its classic symptoms are patchy flushing (redness) and inflammation, particularly on the cheeks, nose and chin. It typically appears between the ages of 30 and 50 and affects more women than men. An excellent source of additional information about rosacea is the website [www.rosacea.org](http://www.rosacea.org).

### Types of Rosacea

Most experts consider there to be 4 types of rosacea:

**Subtype I (Vascular Rosacea)** is characterized by blushing + flushing, a sensation of warmth, and persistent redness of the central face. Commonly, persistent, visible small blood vessels, called telangectasias, appear on the nose, cheeks, chin, and possibly the forehead.

**Subtype II (Papulopustular Rosacea)** includes persistent redness of the central face, but has the addition of transient small firm red bumps (papules) and pus-filled pimples (pustules), also of the central face. Although this looks like acne, the two conditions are very different.

**Subtype III (Phymatous Rosacea)** includes thickened skin, irregular surface nodularities, and often enlargement of the nose, when it is called *rhinophyma*.

**Subtype IV (Ocular Rosacea)** may include inflammation of nearly any part of the eye: dry eyes, tearing, burning, itching, grittiness, bloodshot eyes, recurrent sties, blurry vision, or swollen eyelids.

### Diagnosis

Because other conditions can cause telangectasias or flushing or papules + pustules or eye symptoms, the diagnosis of rosacea requires either persistent central facial redness that persists for longer than 3 months and may get exacerbated *or* phymatous changes *or* two of the following: (1) telangiectasia; (2) flushing; (3) papules and pustules; or (4) ocular manifestations.

### Triggers

Although the exact cause of rosacea remains a mystery, a number of factors can aggravate it or make it worse by causing flushing and increasing blood flow to the surface of your skin. Some of these include:

- **Sun exposure**
- **Emotional stress, anxiety, anger or embarrassment**
- **Hot weather**
- Wind
- Heavy exercise and "lift and load" jobs
- Alcohol
- Hot baths, saunas
- Cold weather
- Spicy foods
- Humidity
- Skin and hair care products containing alcohol, witch hazel, or fragrances, or any causing redness or stinging
- Indoor heat
- Heated beverages
- Certain cosmetics
- Medical conditions
- Drugs that dilate blood vessels, such as some blood pressure medications
- Certain fruits such as citrus fruits, tomatoes, bananas, red plums, raisins, and figs
- Marinated meats
- Certain vegetables such as eggplant, avocados, spinach, lima beans, navy beans, and peas
- Dairy products

### Self-care

Rosacea is an inflammatory condition, so we recommend eating an Anti-inflammatory Diet. Minimize your exposure to anything that causes a flare-up. Because everyone is different, find out what triggers (listed above) affect you so that you can avoid them.

Here are general suggestions for preventing flare-ups:

- **Wear a zinc-based sunscreen every day for the rest of your life.** We carry several of the best medical grade sunscreens available.
- **Practice relaxation techniques to help minimize the blushing and flushing that occur when you are nervous or stressed.**
- **Stay in air conditioning during hot weather, never exercise during the heat of the day, wear wicking clothing while exercising, and hydrate well. Spray water, like the Avène Spring Water, works wonders while you're exercising.**
- **Avoid drinking alcohol, especially types that cause you to flush.**
- Avoid facial products that contain alcohol, witch hazel or other skin irritants. We carry an excellent line of products from Avène specifically designed for patients with sensitive rosacea skin. Our very large group of patients with rosacea swear by these products!
- Protect your face in the winter with a soft scarf or ski mask.
- Avoid irritating your facial skin by rubbing or touching it too much.
- When using moisturizer and a topical medication, apply the medication first, let it dry, then apply the moisturizer.

## Treatment

There are several equally important components of a successful treatment plan for rosacea.

1. **Glytone Enerpeel® Mandelic Acid Peels** (offered at our office) are specifically designed for rosacea and benefit Subtypes I and II.
2. Prescription medications
  - a. Topical retinoid (**Réтрinаl, Retinol 3X**): Retinoids are most effective for Subtype II. Unlike common retinoids such as Retin-A, Tazorac, or Differin, which cause irritation, redness, and peeling and are inappropriate for sensitive rosacea skin, we carry medical grade products that are gentler and better tolerated by sensitive rosacea skin.
  - b. **MetroGel**: This topical antibiotic gel fights bacteria and decreases inflammation in Subtype II. Some patients with Subtype I improve, but many get worse when using MetroGel.
  - c. **Finacea Topical Gel**: Azelaic acid is a naturally occurring acid that helps the skin renew itself more quickly, therefore reducing pustule formation. It also helps fight the bacteria that cause Subtype II.
  - d. **Oracea, Doxycycline** (Oral antibiotics): These fight bacteria and decrease inflammation in Subtype II. Oracea and Doxycycline cannot be used in pregnancy and are therefore contraindicated in fertile women attempting pregnancy or not using birth control. Oracea can also worsen gastric reflux and must be taken on an empty stomach
  - e. **Inderal** (Beta Blocker): This stabilizes blood vessels and can forestall blushing/flushing in patients for whom this is a significant or disabling feature of their rosacea.
3. Laser and Light-based treatments
  - a. **Laser Genesis®** is a gentle heating of the superficial dermis which helps shrink the enlarged pores associated with rosacea and treats the mild permanent background redness. Laser Genesis should be performed every 2-4 weeks for a series of at least 5, and then followed up with individual maintenance treatments as needed.
  - b. **Limelight® Laser and IPL** treat mild diffuse redness with sun damage.
  - c. **Excel V®** treats moderate to severe redness with or without sun damage.
  - d. **Laser Vascular Treatment** treats the distinct visible vessels that often appear on the cheeks, chin, and around the nose of patients with rosacea.
  - e. Patients will often have slight swelling and blotchiness after Excel V and laser vascular treatments. Therefore, these appointments should be scheduled accordingly.

As rosacea is a chronic condition, not a disease which can be cured. People with rosacea will continue to get small visible vessels throughout their lives, especially if they are not adequately careful to avoid their particular triggers. Therefore, on-going maintenance treatments will most likely be required.