

## Rosacea and Its Treatment

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### What is rosacea?

Rosacea (say "rose ay see uh") is a disease that affects the skin of the face. It often begins as a redness that looks like a blush across the nose, cheeks and chin. As time goes on, red pimples and pus-filled bumps may appear. Some people also notice small blood vessels across the nose and cheeks. In some people, the skin of the nose may become red and thick. This is called rhinophyma (say "rino fi ma"). Rosacea can also affect the eyes. It may irritate and inflame the eyelids and the white part of the eye. This is called conjunctivitis.

### What causes rosacea and who gets it?

No one knows the cause of rosacea. There may not be just one cause. Rosacea tends to run in fair-skinned families and tends to occur in people who blush easily. Women are more likely to get rosacea on the cheeks and chin, but men are more likely to get rosacea on the nose.

### What will happen to my skin if I have rosacea?

Rosacea is a condition that lasts for a long period of time. For most people it tends to get better and then get worse (flare up). Rosacea may get worse over time if it is not treated. Certain things seem to make rosacea worse. These include sun exposure, hot drinks, alcohol, spicy foods, and hot or cold temperature.

### Can rosacea be cured?

No, but it can be treated. Treatment is aimed at controlling the symptoms and making your skin look better.

### How is rosacea treated?

The type of medicine your doctor recommends depends on how your skin looks and your choice of medicine. Treatment generally works best at improving the pimples and bumps of rosacea. The redness of the skin is harder to treat. Medicines used to treat rosacea include antibiotics, which can be applied to the skin or taken as pills. Your doctor may recommend an oral antibiotic to start with and follow that with an antibiotic gel called metronidazole that you apply to your skin.

It usually takes up to 2 months of treatment before the skin looks better. As your skin improves, the amount of oral antibiotic can often be cut down or stopped and treatment with the gel may continue. It is hard to know how long you will need treatment for

rosacea. Each person's skin is different, and your doctor may want to adjust your treatment.

Surgery may be used to correct rhinophyma. Enlarged blood vessels on your face can sometimes be removed with a fine electric needle or with laser surgery.

You may want to avoid things that make your rosacea worse, like the sun, hot or cold temperatures, alcohol and spicy foods. Gentle skin care is best, and your doctor may recommend that you use a mild soap and a moisturizer.

To learn more, contact the National Rosacea Society, 800 S. Northwest Highway, Suite 200, Barrington, IL 60010; 847-382-8971.

*This handout provides a general overview on this topic and may not apply to everyone. To find out if this handout applies to you and to get more information on this subject, talk to your family doctor.*

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