

# Rosacea

*"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace." Numbers 6: 24-26*

Rosacea is a condition of the skin, which usually appears between the ages of 30-50. Classic symptoms include persistent redness, patchy flushing, and inflammation of the nose, cheeks, and forehead. Over time, small-dilated blood vessels will become visible. Often small, red bumps or pimples appear, which are not acne, and burning or stinging may be felt. It is most often seen in fair skinned people, and symptoms can expand beyond the face to the neck, chest, scalp, or ears. If not treated, in some cases the nose may become swollen and lumpy. This is what W. C. Fields actually suffered from, as opposed to the common belief that his appearance was the result of alcoholism.

It is believed that 14 million people in the United States have Rosacea, but only a fraction of these seek treatment. This condition may "run in families," but it is not inherited, and is not contagious. There is actually no known cause, but there are many theories. Some believe it is a disorder of the blood vessels. Others think it is caused by a bacterium called Helicobacter Pylori, which is normally found only in the stomach lining, causing ulcers. Some researchers believe it is caused by tiny skin mites or a fungus. The theories are wide ranging and interesting, but at this time no one actually knows the cause for sure.

Rosacea proceeds in four steps: Pre Rosacea: frequent flushing of face, burning with cosmetics or creams Vascular Rosacea: persistent flushing and redness, dilated blood vessels seen as small red lines on face Inflammatory Rosacea: pink bumps and pustules (pus filled bumps) Late Rosacea: skin deep red, increased number of dilated blood vessels, cheek, chin, and forehead skin may become thicker, nose may become bulbous.

There is a concern that only a small fraction of those people with Rosacea is being treated. The problem is that symptoms will worsen without treatment. No one test exists to diagnose Rosacea—the diagnosis is based on symptoms. While the condition is not curable, it IS treatable, and symptoms can be reversed with the proper treatment. Because symptoms vary widely from person to person, treatments also vary. Oral and topical antibiotics may be used, but for the long run, topical antibiotics are commonly used to keep the condition under control. While it may seem odd, antibiotics are not used for their germ killing properties, but because they reduce inflammation. Treatment may also involve lasers, intense pulsed light sources, or minor surgical treatments which can: Remove visible blood vessels Reduce extensive redness Correct disfigurement of the nose Once treated, the results generally last from 9-13 years. Sometimes the symptoms simply disappear after long-term treatment.

Proper skin care is simple but very important. The face should be cleaned with a mild cleanser, rinsed in lukewarm water, and blotted dry with a cotton towel. If sun exposure cannot be avoided, a sunscreen with SPF of at least 15 should be used. Cosmetics may help conceal the redness of Rosacea—first apply a foundation with a green tint, and then a yellow tinted one.

It is important to be aware of things that aggravate Rosacea, including sunlight, hot or spicy foods, extremes in temperatures, emotional stress, alcohol, and hot baths. The National Rosacea Society has free booklets, giving coping advice and helping sufferers identify lifestyle or environmental factors that may trigger a flare up.

Further info: [www.medicinenet.com/rosacea/article.htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/rosacea/article.htm) or "[www.rosacea.org](http://www.rosacea.org)

Blessings, Nurse Karen