

## Triggers

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

- Hot foods or beverages
- Spicy foods
- Alcohol
- Temperature extremes
- Sunlight
- Stress, anger or embarrassment
- Strenuous exercise
- Hot baths, saunas
- Corticosteroids
- Drugs that dilate blood vessels, such as some blood pressure medications

## Self-care

In addition to getting treatment from your doctor, you can play an active part in your treatment. Find out what factors (listed above) affect you. One of the most important things you can do if you have rosacea is to identify your triggers and then **AVOID YOUR TRIGGERS**.

Here are other suggestions for preventing flare-ups:

- **Follow and anti-inflammatory diet.**
- **Wear sunscreen** with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 25 or higher with both UV-A and UV-B protection every day to protect your face from the sun.
- **Avoid drinking alcohol.**
- **Avoid over-heating.**
- **Practice relaxation techniques** to help minimize the blushing and flushing that occur when you are nervous or stressed.
- 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.
- Avoid facial products that contain alcohol or other skin irritants.
- When using moisturizer with a topical medication, apply the moisturizer after the medication has dried.
- Use products that are labeled non-comedogenic.
- If you have a flare, consider using green- or yellow-tinted pre-foundation creams and powders, because they're designed to counter skin redness.

## Treatment

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

1. **Avoid triggers whenever possible.**
2. **Consistently follow any of the self-care suggestions listed above that you have found helpful.**
3. **Regular facials (e.g. every 2 months) with a gentle peel provided by someone who truly understands rosacea.**
4. Prescription medications
  - a. **Topical antibiotics** (MetroGel; Benzaciline): These fight bacteria and decrease inflammation in pustular rosacea. However, many patients with rosacea find these compounds to be too harsh and irritating.
  - b. **Finacea** (Azelaic acid): Azelaic acid is a naturally occurring acid that helps the skin renew itself more quickly, therefore reducing pimple and blackhead formation. It also helps kill the bacteria in very mild pustular rosacea.
  - c. **Oral antibiotics** (Oracea): These fight bacteria and decrease inflammation in all stages of pustular rosacea. Oracea cannot be used in pregnancy and is 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
  - d. **Beta Blockers** (Inderal): These stabilize blood vessels and can forestall the flushing type of rosacea.
5. Laser and Light-based treatments
  - a. **Laser Genesis** is a gentle, comfortable heating of the superficial dermis which helps shrink the enlarged pores associated with rosacea. Laser Genesis should be performed every 2-4 weeks for a series of 5, and then followed up with single maintenance treatments approximately every 6 months.
  - b. **IPL- Photo-facial** helps reduce the ruddy complexion that characterizes rosacea. The treatment feels like intermittent rubber band snaps. Most patients need 3-6 treatments; and the effect is improved by being performed *with* Laser Genesis because of the synergy of applying heat to two layers of the skin at the same time. Patients look and feel like they have had sunburn for up to 3 hours after IPL treatments. Over the 10 days after treatment, pigmented areas of sun damage, if there are any, will get progressively darker and then flake off. It is very important to moisturize well and often throughout the treatment period.
  - c. **Laser Vascular Treatment** treats the discreet visible and broken capillaries that often appear on the cheeks, chin, and around the nose of patients with rosacea. Laser vascular treatments can be performed in conjunction with Laser Genesis and IPL, and in fact, doing these procedures together often leads to better results than any of the procedures alone. Laser vascular treatment feels like a very quick hot sting, but is made much less uncomfortable by application of ice before and after treatment.
    - i. Patients with rosacea, by virtue of the exaggerated reactivity of their skin, will often have slight swelling and blotchiness after laser vascular treatment. Therefore, these appointments should be scheduled accordingly.
    - ii. As rosacea is a chronic condition, not a disease which can be cured, patients will continue to get small broken capillaries 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.