SKIN SCHOOL
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ROSACEA
THE DEEP DIVE

A comprehensive guide for patients who want to understand rosacea in detail.

1. WHAT IS ROSACEA?



Rosacea is a common, chronic inflammatory skin condition that affects the face. It causes redness, visible blood vessels, flushing, bumps, sensitive skin, and sometimes eye problems.

Rosacea usually starts in adulthood and can flare (become worse) over time. With the right treatment and skincare routine, symptoms can be well controlled.

Good news: Rosacea is manageable. The right treatment and trigger control can keep your skin calm and comfortable.

2. WHAT CAUSES ROSACEA?

The exact cause is unknown, but a combination of factors is involved.

Genetics
A family history increases risk.

Immune system overreactivity
Leads to inflammation in the skin.

Abnormal blood vessel response
Blood vessels over-react and dilate easily.

Microorganisms
Demodex mites may play a role.

Environmental triggers
Certain factors can cause flares.

3. COMMON TRIGGERS

Triggers vary from person to person.

- Sun exposure
- Heat and humidity
- Spicy foods
- Alcohol
- Hot drinks
- Stress and emotions
- Exercise
- Skincare products
- Certain medications
- Cold, wind and dry air

4. TYPES OF ROSACEA

Rosacea can affect different areas and present in different ways.
You may have more than one type.



Erythematotelangiectatic (ETR)
Facial redness, visible blood vessels (spider veins), flushing and blushing.

Papulopustular
Red bumps and pustules that look like acne but are not caused by acne.

Phymatous
Thickening of the skin, most often of the nose (rhinophyma).

Ocular
Red, irritated, dry or watery eyes. It may also affect the eyelids.

Granulomatous
Firm red or brown bumps, less common, usually on cheeks, chin or around the mouth.

5. HOW IS ROSACEA DIAGNOSED?

Rosacea is diagnosed clinically based on symptoms and examination.
There is no specific blood test for rosacea.

It may be mistaken for:
- Acne
- Seborrhoeic dermatitis
- Allergic reactions
- Lupus

6. HOW IS ROSACEA TREATED?

Treatment aims to reduce symptoms, prevent flares and improve quality of life.
There is no cure, but rosacea can be well controlled.

TOPICAL TREATMENTS (First-line)	• Topical antibiotics • Ivermectin • Azelaic acid	Reduce inflammation, redness and bumps.
ORAL MEDICATIONS (When needed)	• Oral antibiotics • Low-dose isotretinoin	Reduce inflammation and control more severe symptoms.
LASER & LIGHT THERAPY (For persistent redness and visible vessels)	• IPL (intense pulsed light) • PDL (pulsed dye laser) • Nd:YAG laser	Reduce redness and visible blood vessels.
SKINCARE ESSENTIALS	• Gentle, non-irritating cleansers • Barrier-repairing moisturisers • Daily sunscreen SPF 50 or higher	Protect the skin barrier and prevent flare-ups.
LIFESTYLE & TRIGGER CONTROL	• Identify and avoid personal triggers • Manage stress • Protect skin from extreme weather	Helps prevent flares and keeps skin calm.

7. YOUR DAILY SKINCARE ROUTINE

Keep it simple, gentle and consistent.



MORNING
- Gentle cleanser for sensitive skin
- Soothing moisturiser (look for ceramides, niacinamide)
- Sunscreen SPF 50 (broad-spectrum, mineral sunscreens are often best tolerated)
- Make-up (optional) Use mineral, non-comedogenic products

EVENING
- Gentle cleanser
- Treatment as prescribed (e.g., topical ivermectin)
- Soothing moisturiser Barrier repair is key!

Tips
- Use lukewarm water – not hot.
- Avoid scrubbing or exfoliating.
- Pat skin dry gently.
- Introduce new products one at a time.

8. SKINCARE INGREDIENTS: WHAT TO USE & AVOID

USE (FRIENDLY INGREDIENTS)
- Ceramides
- Niacinamide
- Aloe vera
- Glycerin
- Panthenol (vitamin B5)
- Centella asiatica
- Green tea extract

Soothing, moisturising and barrier-supporting ingredients help calm rosacea-prone skin.

AVOID OR USE WITH CAUTION
- Alcohol (denatured alcohol)
- Witch hazel
- Menthol, camphor, peppermint
- Fragrances and essential oils
- Strong exfoliants (AHAs, BHAs)
- Physical scrubs

These can irritate the skin and trigger redness or flares.

9. MAKE-UP TIPS

- Choose mineral make-up with calming ingredients (e.g. zinc oxide, titanium dioxide).
- Use green-tinted correctors to neutralise redness.
- Avoid heavy, cakey foundations.
- Always remove make-up gently at night.

10. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is rosacea curable?	No, but it can be very well controlled with the right treatment and trigger management.
Will rosacea go away on its own?	No. It is a chronic condition that usually requires ongoing management.
Can rosacea spread?	No, it is not contagious.
Can I wear make-up?	Yes. Use non-irritating, mineral make-up.
Can laser treatment cure rosacea?	Lasers can improve redness and visible vessels but do not cure rosacea. Maintenance treatments may be needed.
Can diet help rosacea?	A balanced diet is important. Some people find that spicy foods, alcohol or hot drinks trigger flares.

11. OCULAR ROSACEA

Rosacea can affect the eyes and eyelids.



Symptoms may include:
- Red, watery or itchy eyes
- Burning or gritty sensation
- Dry eyes
- Sensitivity to light
- Styes (chalazia)
- Red or swollen eyelids

How it is treated
- Eyelid hygiene (warm compresses, gentle cleansing)
- Artificial tears
- Oral or topical antibiotics (when needed)
- Anti-inflammatory treatment

See both your dermatologist and eye doctor if you have ocular rosacea.

12. LIVING WELL WITH ROSACEA

Be patient
Find the right treatment – it may take time.

Stay consistent
Daily skincare and medication make a big difference.

Know your triggers
Keep a diary to identify what causes flares.

Protect your skin
Sunscreen and barrier care every day, all year.

Seek support
Rosacea can affect self-esteem. You are not alone.

13. WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL HELP

Contact a dermatologist if:
- Your rosacea is worsening or not responding to treatment
- You develop painful nodules or thickening of the skin
- You have eye symptoms
- You feel anxious or distressed about your skin

Early treatment prevents complications and improves quality of life.

14. USEFUL RESOURCES

- DermNet NZ – dermnetnz.org
- National Rosacea Society – rosacea.org

15. KEY TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Rosacea is a common and manageable condition. With the right treatment, trigger control and a gentle skincare routine, you can achieve calmer, healthier skin and improve your confidence and quality of life.

Important: Always use treatments as prescribed by your dermatologist.
Do not use topical steroids on face or thin skin areas unless advised.

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