



KAISER PERMANENTE

The Permanente Medical Group, Inc.

DEPARTMENT OF DERMATOLOGY

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## ROSACEA

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### What is rosacea?

Rosacea, also called acne rosacea, is a condition that affects the skin of the face – mostly the areas where people blush. Rosacea is a chronic condition, and that it may come and go in cycles and fluctuates in how severe it is.

### What are the symptoms?

There are a number of symptoms, ranging from mild to severe, which vary from person-to-person.

- **Redness** -- This can look like nothing more than rosy cheeks or a mild sunburn. It's caused by flushing (that is, when blood rushes to the face). If flushing continues to happen, then over time the redness becomes more noticeable and does not go away.
- **Pimples** – As a result of continual flushing, the skin eventually becomes sensitive and pimples may appear on the face. These may be small red bumps or pus bumps (similar to teenage acne).
- **Enlarged, Bumpy Nose** – This condition is called rhinophyma (rhy-no-fye-muh), and may develop in the advanced stages of rosacea, especially in men. When rosacea is not treated early, the nose may develop small bumps and appear swollen.

### Who gets rosacea?

Rosacea is usually seen in adults. It can affect people in their thirties, all the way up to and including people in their seventies and eighties. It seems to be most common in fair-skinned people, but it can affect anyone. Most people with rosacea seem to flush or blush more often than the average person. Contrary to popular belief, there is no evidence that rosacea is caused by alcoholism.

### How is it treated?

Rosacea can't be cured, but can be controlled. Using your medications faithfully can give you much clearer skin and actually help keep the symptoms from coming back. Your provider will recommend treatment designed for you. In most cases this will include an oral antibiotic and/or a topical antibiotic (applied directly to your skin).

### How long will it take for the treatment to start working?

Most people begin to notice some improvement in 3 to 4 weeks and significant improvement in 2 to 3 months. Once your symptoms have cleared up you will need to continue using your pill or topical therapy every day to keep your skin looking it's best. Without this regular therapy your symptoms will return.



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### What else can I do?

- Wash your face twice a day with a mild soap or cleanser such as Dove, Cetaphil, or Aquanil.
- Use a nonalcohol-based, noncomedogenic sunscreen such as Neutrogena's SPF 17 Sunblock whenever you plan on being out in the sun.
- Use oil-free makeup (look for special green-tone products specifically developed to be worn under foundation to hide facial redness).
- Since flushing can cause flare-ups, try to avoid things that make you flush. Some things that may cause flushing include:
  - ⇒ Hard exercise
  - ⇒ Stress
  - ⇒ Sunlight
  - ⇒ Hot drinks
  - ⇒ Caffeine
  - ⇒ Alcohol
  - ⇒ Spicy foods

What causes flushing in one person may not cause flushing in someone else. You might find it helpful to keep track of the things you eat and your activities to get a better idea of what causes your episodes of flushing.