

PATIENT INFORMATION: RED/SENSITIVE SKIN & ROSACEA

WHAT IS ROSACEA?

Red, sensitive skin is common, especially in fair skinned people. All red skin is not the same, and there a host of factors that can cause sensitive skin including - impaired skin barrier due to genetic factors, inflammatory skin disorders, or inappropriate skin care.

Rosacea is one of the most common causes of long-term red, sensitive skin.

There are several subtypes of rosacea:

- Intermittent blushing (flushing)
- Chronic red skin (erythema)
- Visible blood vessels (telangiectasia)
- Small red bumps (pustules)
- Swelling of the skin, especially the nose at the end stages of rosacea (rhinophyma)
- Ocular rosacea: Itchy, dry and sensitive skin, which also effects the eyes

There is no cure for rosacea, but through awareness of triggers and active treatment, it can be managed to improve symptoms and reduce episodes of recurrence. Remember that not all red skin is rosacea, so always see a qualified and experienced dermal clinician – sometimes we can easily improve things with attention to lifestyle and home care.

HOW CAN I MANAGE MY REDNESS?

1. Use a high-quality, zinc-based sunscreen

The most important factor driving rosacea is photodamage. You must use sunscreen daily, *even if you are inside*. Many patients find their redness improves when they stop their usual chemical-based sunscreen/foundation and switch to a mineral based sunscreen containing Zinc Oxide and/or Titanium Dioxide, as well as switching to a mineral based makeup with SPF that blocks both UVA and UVB light.

Jemima's favourites:

- Synergie Skin UberZnc
- Synergie Skin Mineral Make-Up range

Remember that it may take time to find the right sunscreen for your skin so don't lose hope! Clients often tell us La Roche Posay is good for more sensitive skin types. Zinc based skin care also soothes the skin, with no nasty added chemicals.

Never use any sunscreen that is out of date – even “normal” type skin can get florid contact dermatitis (red itchy skin) in this setting.

2. Reduce heat on the skin

Intense workouts and hot showers can exacerbate rosacea due to the fact that heat causes vasodilation, causing your blood vessels to get bigger. Instead, try less strenuous forms of physical activity like swimming, walking or yoga. And a short lukewarm shower is best, with a burst of cold water on the face at the end. In winter avoid overheating and low humidity environments.

3. Improve your skin barrier with suitable home care & avoid physical agitation

Red skin needs moisture. Nourish your skin with a thick, high quality emollient. Rosacea sufferers need something with low fragrance and minimal additives. Avoid all rubbing/scrubbing the skin with abrasive exfoliants, harsh peels, acids and AHA treatments.

Jemima's favourite moisturisers:

- Synergie Skin DermaCalm (daily)
- Synergie Skin Masquerase (weekly)

These are luxurious, thick emollients which contains biologically active ingredients to reduce inflammation and redness. As always, they are not for everyone and you need to find the moisturiser that suits your skin and budget. Some clients have told us that the Simple, QV, Ceruvae brand moisturisers are helpful for them. Just like a good sunscreen, it is recommended that you try a few if you can and see what suits you best.

Jemima does not recommend using Sorbelene cream as it can cause stinging and it is quite thin. Be mindful that "natural", "organic" and "plant-based" oils and cream can still cause issues with rosacea type skin. By all means try these creams and oils, but if your skin is no better after 3 months, or if it makes it worse, stop and try something else.

Home care advice:

Use Vitamin B: Vitamin B (niacinamide) is my initial go to for red sensitive skin. Use it 1-2 times a day (if tolerated) before an emollient.

Incorporate a retinoid: As your skin improves, you may be able to introduce a low potency topical retinol (Vitamin A) based skin care. Unfortunately, if you have sensitive skin, you may need to avoid topical retinoids especially at the beginning of your treatment. But keep at it and retry over time as retinoids actually improve the skin barrier and can really help those with rosacea

The key here is to be patient and go *SLOW*.

Avoid topical Vitamin C if you have rosacea. This is the most likely topical cream to cause redness and skin sensitivity in rosacea type skin. If your skin improves, perhaps try it 2-3 x a week but leave this until last.

4. Reduce or stop the consumption of alcohol and inflammatory foods

This is often highly effective. Red wine is a serious culprit, as it contains high levels of natural salicylates. Inflammatory foods include sugar, spicy foods, and some fruit and vegetables.

[The Food Intolerance Network](#) is an excellent resource for evidence-based approaches linking symptoms to diet.

5. Consider your general health

Some women (and men) with rosacea have estrogen dominance which is linked with other health conditions such as difficulty losing weight, a higher risk of breast and uterine cancer and liver dysfunction.

Visit your GP for a check-up if this concerns you. If you are female and over 40 have a breast check and talk about having a mammogram. Some people with rosacea may have an underlying gut biome issue such as SIBO (small intestinal bacterial overgrowth). If you think your gut is linked to your skin issues, see a qualified Naturopath or GP interested in functional medicine.

IN-CLINIC TREATMENTS AVAILABLE FOR ROSACEA

Low-level Laser Light Therapy (LLLT)

LLLT at 830nm is an effective, medical treatment for rosacea.

Treatment phase: 2 treatments a week for 8 weeks, 2-3 days apart, then a maintenance phase consisting of weekly treatments. Repeat this cycle every 3 months, or as needed.

Healite II

The Healite II device is the gold standard for low-level light therapy and is a safe treatment for any skin type, health condition or age.

Medifacials

Combined with light therapy, regular medifacials such as a gentle peel, retinol, or repair and restore treatment and bioalginate mask, will help soothe inflamed skin and improve redness. However, everyone is different, and some skins won't tolerate a peel or mask, our clinicians are all experts in their field and will assess your skin to recommend the appropriate treatment.

NdYag Laser or Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) Treatment

These devices work by using energy to seal the tiny, visible blood vessels under the surface of the skin, and can greatly improve the appearance of the complexion. Several treatments may be required to achieve the best possible outcome. Laser treatments may attract a Medicare rebate depending on the severity of your condition. A doctor can advise you about costs and Medicare rebates following a consultation and assessment.

PRESCRIBED TREATMENTS AVAILABLE FOR ROSACEA

Topical and oral antibiotics

These include topical antibiotic gels, anti-parasitic agents and oral antibiotics. Sometimes these can really help but they take time (3 months) and can sting the skin so talk to your doctor about these options.

Topical agents to reduce flushing

The hallmark flushing that occurs with rosacea can be embarrassing and uncomfortable. There are some new prescribed treatments that can help with this, for example Mirvaso (brimonidine). This is a doctor-prescribed topical cream that may be prescribed for patients who are concerned about trigger induced flushing. Brimonidine acts by temporarily reducing the dilation of the facial blood vessels.

Dr Grant suggests it be used for special events or when you are undergoing a session of IPL or NdYag laser for your rosacea, as we want to prevent flushing during treatment.

Oral tretinoin (Roaccutane)

For those with treatment resistant rosacea, especially papules or rhinophyma, we will refer you to a dermatologist for support. Rosacea is a medical issue and we'll let you know if this is required.

HAVING AN ASSESSMENT AND GETTING A TREATMENT PLAN

As rosacea is complex and presents uniquely in every patient, we recommend a consultation with a doctor before commencing any treatment. Our clinic offers a medical dermatology clinic with Dr Jemima Gant and you can book online or call us about this. She will assess your skin and discuss any particular factors that may be triggering your rosacea. Your management plan may include lifestyle changes, home care, laser and light therapy, medication, referral to a functional medicine practitioner, or a dermatologist. Everyone is unique and no one's rosacea is managed the same.

BOOKINGS

For further information or to book a consultation with Dr Grant, call the clinic on 0404 123 781, or book online via our website.