

Rosacea (say: “rose-ay-shah”) is a condition that affects the skin on the face.

## Symptoms

Rosacea often begins as redness that looks like a blush across the nose, cheeks, chin or forehead. As time goes on, red pimples and pus-filled bumps may appear. Some people also notice small blood vessels across their nose and cheeks. In some people, the skin of the nose may become red and thick. This is called rhinophyma (say: “rye-no-fie-muh”). Rosacea can also affect the eyes. It may irritate and inflame the eyelids and the white part of the eye. This is called conjunctivitis.

## Causes and Risk Factors

### What causes rosacea and who gets it?

Doctors don’t know the exact cause of rosacea. There may be more than just one cause. Rosacea tends to run in fair-skinned families and tends to occur in people who blush easily. Symptoms usually begin in adults between 30 years and 60 years of age. Women are more likely to get rosacea on the cheeks and chin, but men are more likely to get rhinophyma. Rosacea tends to be more severe in men.

## Treatment

### Can rosacea be cured?

No, but it can be treated. Rosacea is a condition that lasts for a long period of time. For most people it tends to get better and then get worse (flare up). Rosacea may get worse over time if not treated. Treatment is aimed at controlling the symptoms and making your skin look better.

### How is rosacea treated?

The type of medicine your doctor recommends will depend on how your skin looks. Treatment generally works best at improving the pimples and bumps of rosacea. The redness of the skin is harder to treat. Medicines used to treat rosacea include antibiotics, which can be applied to the skin or taken as pills. Your doctor may recommend an oral (taken by mouth) antibiotic to start and follow that with an antibiotic gel or cream called metronidazole that you apply to your skin.

It may take up to 2 months of treatment before the skin looks better. As your skin appearance improves, the amount of oral antibiotic you take can often be cut down or stopped. Treatment with the gel may continue. It is hard to know how long you will need treatment for rosacea. Each person’s skin is different, and your doctor may want to adjust your treatment.

Surgery may be used to correct rhinophyma. Enlarged blood vessels on your face can sometimes be removed by using a fine electric needle or with laser surgery.



### What can I do to help my rosacea get better?

Certain things seem to make rosacea worse. These include sun exposure, hot drinks, alcohol, spicy foods, strenuous exercise, stress, and very hot or cold temperatures. If these things make your rosacea worse, you may want to avoid them as much as possible.

Gentle skin care is best, and your doctor, may recommend that you use a mild, unscented soap and a moisturizer. It is also a good idea to use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher on a regular basis.

## Other Organizations

National Rosacea Society

## Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What treatment is best for me?
- Do I have rosacea?
- How long will my treatment last?
- Should I make any changes to my diet?
- Should I avoid the sun?
- Is there anything I can do at home to help myself?
- Do I need to wear sunscreen every time I go outside?
- Will I always have rosacea?
- What skin care routine is best for me?
- Could the rosacea go away on its own?