

expert relief for rosacea

Get the red out with these simple solutions. BY MARY ROSE ALMASI

Rosacea, characterized by flushing and acne-like bumps on the face, is a chronic skin disease affecting nearly 14 million people. Anyone can get it, but those with fair skin or a family history seem to be at greater risk. Rosacea occurs when the small blood vessels in the facial skin expand too easily, although why this happens is unknown. One theory is that it's caused by a disruption in the nervous system, since rosacea is often brought on by stress. What *is* certain is that environmental and emotional factors lead to episodes of flushing. You can't cure this condition, but identifying your triggers can help control it, as Michelle Pelle, M.D., a San Diego dermatologist, explains below.

The basic facts

The skin's **dermis** contains a fine network of blood vessels called capillaries, which exchange substances, such as oxygen and nutrients, between the bloodstream and the surrounding tissue. When the blood vessels dilate, **inflammation** results, causing redness and flushing. Over time, outbreaks may increase, and the **dilated capillaries** can become permanent and prominently visible on the face (**telangiectasia**).



ROSACEA

1. dermis
2. inflammation
3. dilated capillaries
4. telangiectasia

What to look for

Symptoms vary, but may include:

- > **Concentrated redness** on the face
- > **Small white bumps** filled with pus
- > **Noticeable** broken blood vessels



Wash with warm (not hot) water to avoid flushing

Simple solutions

To help prevent (or cover up) flushing, follow these tips:

- > **Keep a journal of what causes redness.** Common triggers are spicy foods, alcohol, and stress. Download a diary at the National Rosacea Society's website, rosacea.org.
- > **Wear sunscreen daily** to block the sun's UV rays (sun exposure can exacerbate rosacea).
- > **Use hypoallergenic moisturizers.** They contain gentle ingredients that alleviate redness. Best bets: Aveeno Ultra-Calming Daily Moisturizer (\$14) and Eucerin Redness Relief Soothing Night Creme (\$15; both at drugstores).
- > **Camouflage with green concealer** to neutralize red undertones in your skin. Try Physician's Formula Mineral Wear Cream Concealer in soft green (\$7; at drugstores).



EXPERT STRATEGY If these suggestions don't help, see a dermatologist, who may prescribe a topical or an oral antibiotic to ease inflammation, says Michelle Pelle, M.D., an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the University of California at San Diego. Lasers can erase dilated capillaries and significantly reduce background redness. Expect to pay \$225 to \$400 per session; it may take three or more sessions for complete results. > **The bottom line** "Although rosacea has no cure," says Pelle, "you can control it to the point where no one knows you have it."