

# Rosacea

## **A Common Condition**

Rosacea is a common chronic skin condition which affects an estimated 14 million Americans. People who are most affected by rosacea tend to be in their 30s or 40s and are generally of lighter complexion.

## **Signs and Symptoms**

Rosacea refers to a range of symptoms that generally start with some blushing or modest redness on the cheeks, nose, forehead and chin. As the condition progresses, symptoms typically worsen to include persistent redness on the nose and cheeks. Small blood vessels begin to grow, particularly on the nose, and become increasingly visible. Diffused generalized redness may become constant and often worsens after exercise, the drinking of coffee or alcohol, or exposure to some other kind of "trigger." Pimples may develop as well, a factor that has led to the misperception that rosacea is "adult acne."

## **Rosacea Will Worsen Without Treatment**

Rosacea absolutely gets worse if you don't treat it. I tell my patients who have rosacea that it takes a long time for the telltale spider veins (a major symptom of rosacea) to first appear on the face. The sun has to hit the skin for a significant period of time to trigger the creation of a few blood vessels, but once those have formed, it becomes easier for the sun to stimulate the gene in those cells to produce even more. So you have this downward spiralling effect. I often hear such comments from my patients as, "I just started having these facial veins a year ago and now I'm covered." The process begins to snowball, creating more and more blood vessels — and redness.

## **Treatments Help Manage Symptoms**

While there is currently no cure for rosacea, its symptoms often can be managed quite effectively. Inflammatory symptoms, such as acne, are usually treated with oral and topical antibiotics. The blood vessels associated with rosacea can be treated with lasers.

## **Long-lasting Results**

Once you've undergone laser treatments to remove the blood vessels associated with rosacea, it takes a very long time for them to come back. If you then use sunscreen every day, you might not need to have any further laser treatment for another two to eight years, maybe longer. Reducing sun exposure is imperative for preventing further blood vessels from developing.

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