

Redness & Rosacea: Calming Strategies

Posted by Invity team on 14th Jun 2024



Some of us are born with skin that flushes naturally, and that can be charming, but when facial redness is permanent, accompanied by itchiness, or triggered by spicy food or a glass of wine, it can be distressing.

Your skin could be sensitive, or it's become sensitised and something's causing it to become irritable. It could also be rosacea. Knowing the difference between these is important, and you need to find the cause in order to treat it. Bottom line: don't delay in treating it.

Scroll on to find out what's causing your facial redness, learn the triggers, and get great tips on how to manage redness-prone skin.

How Does Facial Redness Happen?

It's caused by a combination of irritation and increased blood flow.

Irritants on the skin trigger the release of free radicals, which compromise the skin barrier—your skin's protective shield. This, in turn, triggers inflammation in the skin, which causes the release of more free radicals, in a cycle of ongoing inflammation – even stinging and itching – until the cycle is interrupted.

This irritation also causes blood vessels to expand, which shows up on the skin as redness and swelling, often accompanied by a sensation of heat. It can occur on the whole face or in patches, and it can last a long, uncomfortable time.

60%+ of women and 50%+ of men say they experience some sensitivity

Sensitive or Sensitised Skin?

Over 60% of women and over 50% of men report experiencing some degree of sensitivity. But knowing what kind of sensitivity affects you is important.

Sensitive skin

True sensitive skin is something you're born with, in which case it is considered a skin type; it is fragile and will probably need to be managed your whole life. You can, however, have skin that is both dry and sensitive, oily and sensitive, or even normal and sensitive, and this is considered a condition.

Signs of sensitive skin

It can occur anywhere on your body, but the face is often the most affected area. Your skin is constantly hypersensitive, leading to frequent overreactions such as allergies and rashes. These reactions cause inflammation, redness, and flakiness, along with uncomfortable sensations like stinging, burning, and itching.

What you need to know

Flare-ups can be caused by various factors, including extreme hot and cold, harsh soaps and detergents, fragrance and dyes, sun exposure and stress. Your skin also reacts more intensely to things that wouldn't bother most people, even substances like water, for some.

Sensitised skin

Any skin can become sensitised. Luckily, it's usually a temporary condition, if you identify the cause and address it.

It can develop due to a weakened skin barrier, which allows irritants to penetrate the skin. The signs are similar to sensitivity – flare-ups with dryness, redness, stinging, burning, and itching.

What you need to know

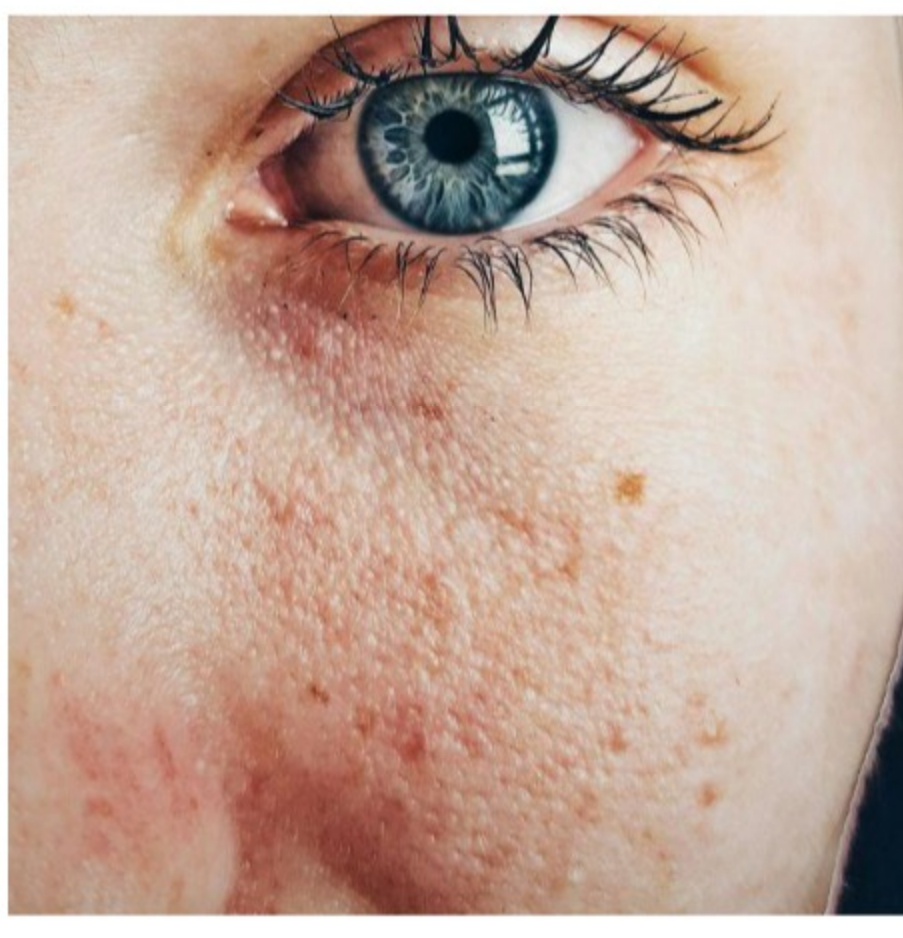
Finding out what is triggering the sensitisation (redness and irritation) is important, so you can prevent this happening.

What causes sensitisation?

Skincare habits: using harsh cleansers, over-exfoliation, and using too much of the wrong skincare products are common culprits, because they can cause dehydration and strip the barrier.

Other contributors: ageing, lifestyle habits, stress, pollution, UV damage, hormonal fluctuations, certain medications, and illness.

But, restoring the skin barrier can alleviate many of these issues.



Rosacea affects around 5-10% of us all. It's especially common among women and fair-skinned people aged 30+.

Understanding Rosacea

Rosacea occurs mainly on the nose, cheeks, forehead and chin, sometimes creeping to the neck, scalp and chest. It can also cause swollen, reddened eyelids. Typically, it begins after age 30, and it's more common in people with fair skin, especially women.

Rosacea is a chronic inflammatory skin condition, so it becomes worse at times, then calms down again. But, if left untreated, rosacea can progress through 4 stages, causing permanent damage, so early diagnosis and treatment is essential.

The 4 stages of rosacea

Stage 1: temporary redness and flushing.

Stage 2: widespread redness and the appearance of small blood vessels on the skin's surface.

Stage 3: visible redness and inflammation, with small red spots, sometimes pus-filled.

Stage 4: permanent coarsening and swelling of the skin and a pitted, lumpy and enlarged nose, in severe cases, especially common in men.

Important to know

Rosacea is often mistaken as adult acne (because of the pustules), but the tell-tale sign that it isn't acne is that there are no blackheads.

It's also mistaken for eczema or skin allergy, because of the skin irritation.

See a dermatologist for an accurate diagnosis.

Causes of Rosacea

Although the precise cause remains unknown, rosacea often runs in families.

There appears to be a link to an impaired skin barrier. [1]

We all have invisible mites on our skin, but people with rosacea tend to have an increased number of demodex mites on their skin.

And there's also growing evidence suggesting a link between rosacea skin biome and gut health. Some studies have found an imbalance in the gut microbiome of people with rosacea. This imbalance may contribute to inflammation, a key factor in rosacea. [2]



Facial Redness Triggers to Avoid

Whatever type of facial redness you experience, you can reduce flare-ups that increase blood flow to the skin. Avoid these activities and conditions as much as possible:

Food and drinks: Avoid alcohol and spicy foods.

Temperature extremes: Steer clear of hot baths, steam rooms, saunas, and extreme weather conditions, including heat, dry cold and wind.

Environmental exposures: Limit exposure to sunlight, air pollution, and chlorine in swimming pools.

Medications: If you have to take blood pressure medication, make your doctor aware of your skin condition, so they can be cautious with drugs that dilate blood vessels.

Skincare products: Avoid harsh products that strip the protective barrier, like scrub exfoliators and harsh toners, as they can irritate sensitive skin.

Irritant ingredients: Avoid ingredients that can aggravate rosacea, such as alcohol, fragrance, lanolin, and artificial colorants. Be cautious with specific chemicals like alpha-lipoic acid, sodium lauryl sulfate, and benzoyl peroxide. Retinoids and exfoliating acids should only be used if the formula is suitable for sensitive skin.

Emotional factors: Manage stress, embarrassment, and anger.

Physical activity: Opt for less strenuous exercise.

How to Manage Skin Redness

Look after your gut health: Make dietary changes to a healthy diet that features pre- and probiotics [3] (including fermented foods like kimchi and omega-3 fatty acids). Or take a good omega-3 and probiotic supplement to help manage symptoms.

Skincare and make-up: Opt for products labelled "suitable for sensitive skin", "dermatologically tested" and "hypoallergenic" to minimise the risk of irritation.

CAUTION! Whenever you try a new skincare or make-up product, test it first on the inside of your wrist or behind your ear for 24 hours to see if you have any irritation or reaction.

Cleansers: Use a mild, soap-free cleanser that has a soothing action, and avoid over-cleansing.

Barrier repair and moisture: Use a gentle, skin-priming product with soothing, moisturising ingredients, like our [Youth Activating Essence](#). It bathes the skin in moisture-trapping sodium hyaluronate, and soothing ingredients as it strengthens the barrier with polysaccharides mmannose-6-phosphate complex and beta-glucan.

Nourish, protect and calm: Our [Youth Activating Cream Concentrate](#) strengthens, hydrates and nourishes skin at cellular level. It improves the barrier function, soothes inflammation and reduces redness with NAD and botanical actives.

Soothing relief: [SuperNAD Youth Activating Facial Sheet Mask](#) is your twice-weekly (or whenever you need it) intense soothing, hydrating, calming and illuminating treatment that revitalises and energises your skin's natural defence system.

All rosacea-prone and reddened skins should try our [Relief & Restore Essentials Kit](#), with these three products, available at a special price.

Sunscreen: Essential for this fragile skin to prevent burning and inflammation. Select a non-irritating, hypoallergenic, mineral sunscreen with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide and an SPF of 30 or higher, like our [Youth Activating Invisible Mineral Sunscreen](#).

How Sensitive Skin, Sensitised Skin, and Rosacea Differ

	SENSITIVE SKIN	SENSITISED SKIN	ROSACEA
Cause	Reacts easily to irritants	Compromised skin barrier (similar to sensitive skin)	Inflammation of facial blood vessels (cause unknown)
Symptoms	Dryness, redness, itching, stinging	Dryness, redness, itching, stinging (may be more severe than sensitive skin)	Redness, flushing, pimples, bumps, visible blood vessels
How it develops	Reaction happens right away or within hours	Reaction happens right away or within hours	Varies, can develop gradually over weeks or months
Who it affects	People with any skin type	People with a history of sensitive skin or compromised skin barrier	Fair-skinned people (more common), over 30

Redness and Rosacea: When to See a Doctor

If you're experiencing persistent redness, it's important to see a doctor or dermatologist to get a proper diagnosis and discuss treatment options.

Dermatologists can also offer a range of medical treatments for sensitivity and rosacea based on your individual symptoms:

Medications: Oral antibiotics and topical treatments to reduce inflammation and redness.

Light therapies: Vascular lasers and Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) treatments target and shrink blood vessels, improving rosacea's appearance.

Surgery: In severe rosacea cases, cryo-, laser-, and electro-surgery can treat an enlarged, bulbous nose.

Last word...

Your best option with any kind of facial redness and irritation is to diagnose and treat the condition as soon as you become aware of it.

If you're unsure, seek help from a dermatologist in order to slow and lessen its progression. But it's never too late to seek help.

Wishing you good skin health!

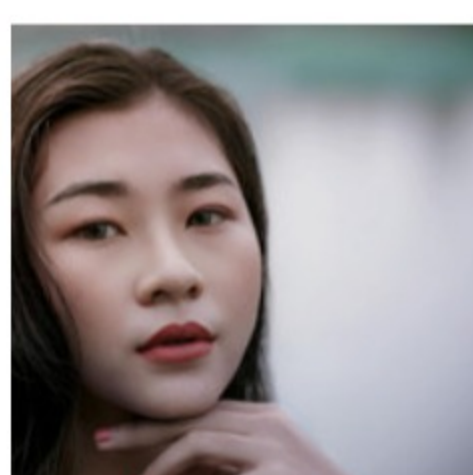
Sources:

For more detailed guidance and tips on rosacea, explore resources such as [Rosacea.org](#) and the [UK NHS](#).

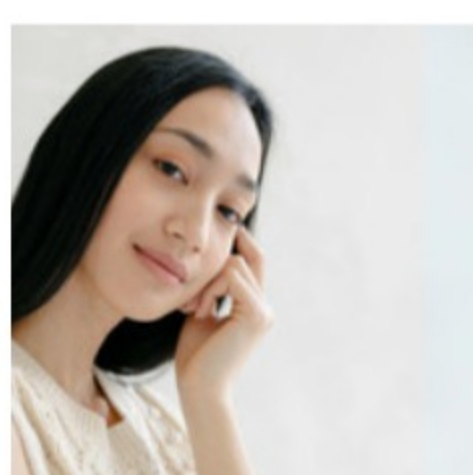
1. NIH. "The Prevalence of Sensitive Skin." *Front Med*. 2019. doi: [10.3389/fmed.2019.00098](#)

2. NIH. "Role of the skin microbiota and intestinal microbiome in rosacea." *Front Microbiol*. 2023. doi: [10.3389/fmicb.2023.1108661](#)

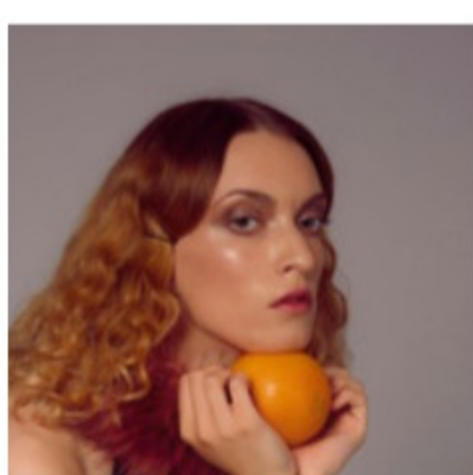
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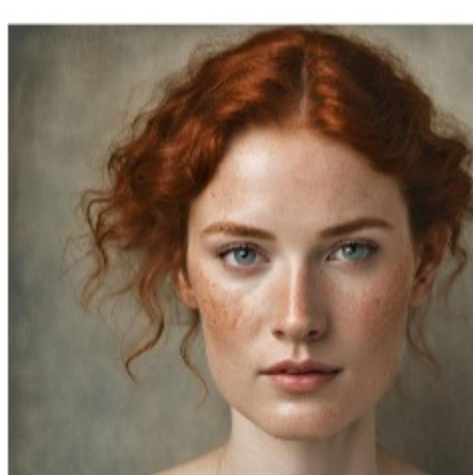
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