

THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL discomfort of rosacea

NOT ONLY DO PEOPLE WITH ROSACEA SUFFER FROM SKIN REDNESS, BUMPS AND PIMPLES, THEY ALSO EXPERIENCE MENTAL ANGUISH. BUT NOW, THERE ARE EFFECTIVE TREATMENTS THAT DIMINISH THE PHYSICAL SIGNS AND, WITH THEM, THE EMOTIONAL REPERCUSSIONS.

By Sophie Gagnon

Most people who consult about an active case of rosacea are between 45 and 60. Some people deal with Stage 1 rosacea (blotchy skin) all their lives. But most of the time, according to dermatologist Dr. Daniel Barolet, the illness continues to develop and pimples, or—more rarely—the famous “brandy nose” appear.

Barolet affirms that up to 10% of fair-skinned people may be affected. People with sensitive skin are also more prone to the condition, as are those with a family history of rosacea.

PHYSICAL SIGNS

The main sign of this chronic inflammatory skin condition is the presence of red patches, often on the cheeks and nose. At first, it is temporary, then it becomes more persistent and noticeable. Symptoms vary from person to person, but it is common for the skin to become irregular and rough due to the bumps, dilated blood vessels and purulent pimples that characterize this disease.

There are different types of rosacea and each of them has several stages. However, in nearly half of all cases, the redness—with or without pimples—is accompanied by eye problems, including bloodshot and watery eyes, repeated sties and a feeling of irritation, dryness or sand in the eyes.



HEALTH

EMOTIONAL REPERCUSSIONS

But rosacea's impact extends beyond its physical symptoms. Due to its affect on personal appearance, rosacea also has negative consequences on sufferers' emotional and social health. Low self-esteem affects 75% of those with the condition and they are five times as likely to become depressed as the rest of the population.

Unfortunately, people with rosacea are often the targets of nasty comments and prejudice since rosacea is mistakenly associated with alcohol abuse, inadequate protection against the sun and poor skin hygiene.

"ANTI-INFLAMMATORY CREAMS, ANTIBIOTICS AND LASER TREATMENTS CAN REDUCE ROSACEA SYMPTOMS"

TREATMENTS TO THE RESCUE

Luckily, while it is impossible to cure rosacea, there are many ways to alleviate the physical symptoms, and as a result, improve the spirits of those affected.

Dr. Barolet points out the significant research advances over the past 10 years. "We now know much more about how to minimize the symptoms of rosacea and several new creams provide more targeted action against rosacea." Therefore, people no longer have to go out in public with faces disfigured by the pimples of rosacea.

"When pimples appear, we can treat them with anti-inflammatory creams or oral antibiotics," said Dr. Barolet, reached in the clinic he owns.

If necessary, laser treatments can remove the tiny dilated blood vessels that tend to cause pimples to reoccur. According to Dr. Barolet, usually two laser treatments are enough to control the rosacea, followed by a maintenance treatment every two to five years. Laser treatments are only available in private clinics, however, and each session costs from \$400 to \$500.

ACT ON TRIGGER FACTORS

Another way to reduce rosacea symptoms is to act on the trigger factors, which vary from person to person: exposure to sunlight, extreme temperatures, intense physical effort, stress, spicy food, very hot or very cold food or drinks, caffeinated drinks, alcohol (especially red wine), etc. These trigger factors cause flushing, and in the long run, the permanently dilated blood

vessels and irritation that result in the appearance of red, dry and bumpy patches in the middle of the face.

Proper skin care can also help to restore the skin's protective function and ease the symptoms of rosacea.

TRUE OR FALSE?

1- It is a form of acne that appears in your 40s.

False. Although rosacea often manifests as temporary redness, red bumps and pimples, it is not acne.

2- It affects women more than men.

True. However, men are more affected by a rare type of rosacea, characterized by a thickening of the skin, which becomes red, bumpy and swollen, usually affecting the nose.

3- It affects 300,000 Canadians.

False. Over 3,000,000 Canadians suffer from this condition.

4- It doesn't go away by itself.

True. But symptoms may be milder for a while, before reactivating.

5- One of the first signs of rosacea is a frequent tendency to blush.

True. Then the red patches become more persistent.

SHOULD I CONSULT A DOCTOR?

If your condition resembles one of the following symptoms, it's time you spoke with your physician about rosacea:

1. Visible redness on the face that doesn't go away.
2. Emotional symptoms (depression, shyness, social anxiety) because of your flushing or facial redness.
3. Sensation of burning, itching or swollen skin accompanied by flushing.
4. Constant pimples, red bumps and red patches on the face.
5. Bloodshot, irritated and watery eyes.
6. Thickened skin, bumps and redness on the nose, chin, forehead or ears. 

SOURCE: ACNE AND ROSACEA SOCIETY OF CANADA, ROSACEAHELP.CA