



# Red Menace

Clients no longer need to hide from rosacea symptoms. Help them reveal a clearer complexion through healing spa therapies.

By Katherine Stewart

**R**osy complexions can be deceiving. Many people assume that they're a result of hardy outdoor living, a fondness for drink or even a cheerful disposition. But all too often, perpetually flushed cheeks and reddened noses are a symptom of rosacea, a chronic condition involving skin inflammation—particularly on the face. It may appear as redness, but rosacea can also lead to swelling; prominent, spider-like blood vessels; and skin eruptions. And, in nearly all cases, its sufferers struggle to subdue its troublesome symptoms.

Fortunately, skincare science has advanced to effectively treat rosacea with topical products in professional spa services. Here's how you can integrate these helpful healers into your spa's protocol.

## Beyond a Blush

Rosacea affects more than 14 million Americans. However, it's still misunderstood, and many don't even know that they're affected by it. "Rosacea is often mistaken for acne," says Howard Murad, M.D., associate clinical professor of medicine (dermatology) at UCLA and founder of Murad ([www.murad.com](http://www.murad.com)). "A misguided self-diagnosis is one of the biggest mistakes."

But rosacea isn't always easy for skincare professionals to detect either. Hypersensitivity, eczema and even lupus can also mimic the condition by inducing redness in the skin. Indeed, it's one of the most perplexing conditions

facing estheticians today. To make matters worse, many common spa services and products actually worsen it.

The causes of rosacea are up for debate. Most experts agree that some combination of genetic and environmental factors is to blame. Some scientists have determined that a certain protein, known as cathelicidin, plays an important role. We all produce it when we have an inflammatory response to an infection or wound. Under normal circumstances, that response is healthy, as temporary swelling greatly benefits healing. However, rosacea sufferers might produce too much of this protein at the wrong time.

## Pretty Without the *Pink*

Help rosacea clients banish symptoms with specifically formulated skin care.

**5 Star Formulators Christina Unstress Quick Performance Calming Cream**

rebalances stressed skin with fruit acids. **888.200.3977**, [www.5starformulators.com](http://www.5starformulators.com)

**B. Kamins, Chemist Booster Blue Rosacea Treatment** neutralizes and comforts with green tea extract, vitamin-rich Bio-Maple compound and oat refractions.

**888.252.6467**, [www.bkamins.com](http://www.bkamins.com)

**Darphin Intral Redness Relief Recovery Cream** protects against irritants and external aggressors that may cause visible redness. **866.880.4559**, [www.darphin.com](http://www.darphin.com)

**DermAware Rosacea Travel Kit** contains two anti-inflammatory cleansers, Delicate Balance soothing toner, and day and night moisturizers. Each item is pH-balanced and free from color, perfume and sulfates. **888.292.DERM**, [www.dermaware.com](http://www.dermaware.com)

**DermaQuest Skin Therapy Antioxidant Soothing Serum** strengthens the skin and accelerates tissue repair. Added copper calms inflammation.

**800.213.8100**, [www.dermaquestinc.com](http://www.dermaquestinc.com)

**Elemis SOS Daily Redness Relief** reduces the flushed appearance of broken capillaries. A phytoamine biocomplex of centella asiatica, meadowsweet and amino acids soothes skin. **800.423.5293**, [www.timetospa.com](http://www.timetospa.com)

**Éminence Organic Skin Care Yellow Sweet Clover Anti-Redness Masque** soothes and hydrates with sweet clover, stone crop and jojoba oil.

**888.747.6342**, [www.eminenceorganics.com](http://www.eminenceorganics.com)

**G.M. Collin Sensiderm Gel** eases irritation and restores the epidermal balance with hydrating and balancing actives, including coralline and madecassoside and copper. **800.341.1531**, [www.gmcollin.com](http://www.gmcollin.com)

**Guinot Crème Red Logic** strengthens the epidermis and the skin's natural defenses with aloe vera and calendula. It promotes microcirculation with arnica extract, esculoside and veinoderm. **212.532.1030**, [www.guinotusa.com](http://www.guinotusa.com)

**Murad Sensitive Skin Soothing Serum** targets rosacea-prone skin with hyaluronic acid and glycolipids, which reduce inflammation and sensitivity. **888.996.8723**, [www.murad.com](http://www.murad.com)

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“While the disorder itself is genetic, flare factors—also known as triggers—can set it off or make it worse,” says Mark Lees, Ph.D., author of *Skin Care: Beyond the Basics* (Milady, 2007) and founder of Mark Lees Skin Care ([www.marklees.com](http://www.marklees.com)). “They include heat, sun, stress, alcoholic beverages (especially red wine), spicy foods and hot beverages.”

For more nutrition-related triggers, see “The Skincare Diet” on page 68.

Rosacea typically appears between the ages of 30 and 50, according to Murad. “Fair-skinned, blue-eyed individuals are more susceptible to rosacea, but darker skin types can be affected as well,” he says.

Because of its effects on personal appearance, rosacea can have a profound impact on sufferers’ psychological well-being. In surveys by the National Rosacea Society ([www.rosacea.org](http://www.rosacea.org)), more than 76% of patients said their condition had lowered their self-confidence and self-esteem. Among those

with severe symptoms, nearly 70% said the disorder had adversely affected their professional interactions, and nearly 30% said they had even missed work because of their condition.

“Unfortunately, some sufferers are so embarrassed or traumatized by the appearance of rosacea that they quit their jobs, and become depressed or reclusive,” says Annet King, director of global education for Dermalogica ([www.dermalogica.com](http://www.dermalogica.com)) and The International Dermal Institute ([www.dermalinstitute.com](http://www.dermalinstitute.com)). “It’s a debilitating condition on physical and psychological levels.”

But the condition presents a genuine opportunity for the skincare and wellness community. “Aiding the rosacea sufferer through coaching, treatment and symptom management—perhaps alongside that of a medical professional team—can be incredibly rewarding work for a skincare professional,” King says. “We can truly help in this arena.”

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**Pevonia Botanica Your Skincare Solution Rosacea Skin Kit** treats redness with green tea, licorice, chamomile and French rose essential oil. **800.738.6642**, [www.pevonia.com](http://www.pevonia.com)

**Repêchage Hydra 4 Mask for Sensitive Skin** prevents blotchiness and excessive dryness with *enteromorpha compressa* seaweed and olive leaf extracts. **800.248.7546**, [www.repechage.com](http://www.repechage.com)

**Rhonda Allison Rosacea Serum** treats and protects vulnerable skin with amino acids, and the extracts of alba bark, scrophularia nodosa, willow bark and olive leaf. **866.313.SKIN**, [www.rhondaallison.com](http://www.rhondaallison.com)

**Sanitas Skincare Rosacea Serum** stabilizes blood vessels and consistency with vitamins C and K, essential fatty acids and squalane. **888.855.8425**, [www.sanitas-skincare.com](http://www.sanitas-skincare.com)

**Skin Blends Caps Botanical Serum** contains seven botanicals credited with improving rosacea: ground ivy, hibiscus, horse chestnut, lemon bioflavonoids, passion fruit, peppermint and rose hips. **877.754.6253**, [www.skinblends.com](http://www.skinblends.com)

**Wilma Schumann Rosacea Rescue** calms irritated skin and reduces capillary fragility with saponines, butcher’s broom extract and gotu kola extract. **800.440.3032**, [www.wilmaschumann.com](http://www.wilmaschumann.com)

**Yon-Ka Phyto 54** diffuses redness and strengthens capillaries with rosemary and aloe. **800.966.5255**, [www.yonkausa.com](http://www.yonkausa.com)

**Yum Gourmet Skincare Marine Algae Calming Gel** is formulated for sensitive and rosacea-afflicted skin. Soothing botanicals and organic seaweed hydrate and reduce inflammation. **877.YUMLINE**, [www.yumskincare.com](http://www.yumskincare.com)

## Getting the Red Out

Though there's no way to eliminate rosacea altogether, effective treatment can relieve its signs and symptoms. The medical approach generally favors a combination of prescription-strength topical and oral preparations—most commonly antibiotics. “Rosacea is an inflammatory disease, so topicals are critical,” says Jan Marini, CEO of Jan Marini Skin Research ([www.janmarini.com](http://www.janmarini.com)). “Botanicals, in some instances, can actually cause the client to negatively react. On the other hand, some things that are accepted medically, such as glycolic acid, can be very effective.

“Glycolic acid has been shown time and again to reduce inflammation and provide a beneficial effect,” Marini adds.

Other helpful anti-inflammatories include azelaic acid (which is also sold by prescription), green tea, some forms of vitamin C and pomegranate.

Prescription-strength medications, such as oral and topical antibiotics, may carry unwanted side effects, including skin irritation and nausea. Long-term tolerance to these drugs is also unpredictable.

For these reasons, many rosacea sufferers turn to spa treatments, which can help soothe and treat the skin in a noninvasive manner. “There are many products available in the professional skincare market that have surfaced over the last five years to help fight the signs of rosacea,” says Ellen Clark, CEO and founder of Control Corrective Skincare ([www.controlcorrective.com](http://www.controlcorrective.com)), a line distributed by Universal Companies ([www.universalcompanies.com](http://www.universalcompanies.com)) and sold to dermatologists, med-spas and day spas. “All of the effective products share a common goal: to calm, balance, hydrate and protect delicate, sensitive, overstimulated skin.”

Due to its tricky nature, rosacea is a difficult condition to treat.

Even medical treatments are often unsuccessful. Product formulations that combine pharmaceutical-grade ingredients with natural extracts are most effective, according to Ben Kaminsky, CEO and founder of B. Kamins, Chemist ([www.bkamins.com](http://www.bkamins.com)). “Soothing ingredients, such as chamomile extract and bisabolol, minimize inflammation and redness,” he says.

“Another option is maple isolate—derived from the tree's sap—which has natural antibacterial, antifungal and antimicrobial properties, as well as amino peptides that latch on to receptor cells to regenerate the skin,” Kaminsky adds. “Over the years, these preparations have been proven to treat rosacea.”

Other industry experts recommend a less-is-more approach to treating the condition, such as with home care products containing soothing and balancing ingredients. These include healing copper and protective zinc oxide, according to Sam Dhatt, Ph.D., a chemist and founder of DermaQuest Skin Therapy ([www.dermaquestinc.com](http://www.dermaquestinc.com)). “I also recommend minerals for clients with rosacea,” he says. “The elements used in mineral makeup are inert, which means they don't cause chemical reactions on the skin.”

To be truly effective, treatment for rosacea must focus at the causal level, which is almost always in the digestive system, according to Benjamin Fuchs, chemist and formulator for SanItas Skincare ([www.sanitas-skincare.com](http://www.sanitas-skincare.com)). “First, offending food allergens must be identified and eliminated,” he says. “Typical culprits are dairy, grains (including corn), peanuts, soy and eggs, nightshade vegetables and citrus fruits.”

Achlorhydria (low stomach acid) is also associated with the symptoms of rosacea, according to a 2008 study in the

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*American Journal of Digestive Diseases*. “Stomach acid can be supplemented over the counter with Betaine Hcl or via prescription with compounded HCL drops,” Fuchs says.

Other types of supplementation may help to correct the internal imbalances that can lead to this condition. “Fragile, rosacea-prone skin can also be helped internally with a nutrient-rich program that strengthens cell function, reduces inflammation, and makes skin more resilient and less vulnerable to irritation,” Murad says. “Ideal choices are zinc, curcumin, aloe vera and B-vitamins to make skin more robust and to help the body cope with inflammatory and environmental irritants.”

### **Sensitive Solutions**

When treating rosacea sufferers, spa professionals can benefit from educating themselves about the disorder and learning the myriad ways it can manifest itself in clients. Most experts agree that a spa treatment should emphasize cleansing.

“You want a facial that’s deep-cleaning, yet gentle,” says Katherine Tomasso, national director of education for Yon-Ka ([www.yonkausa.com](http://www.yonkausa.com)). “Getting regular treatments like this from a highly trained esthetician helps to improve numerous skin conditions, including the heat and irritation associated with rosacea.”

Tomasso adds that it’s important to educate clients about the difference between professional skincare services and homecare treatments. “Estheticians have access to intensive products and protocols not intended for consumer use,” she says. “Also, the esthetician must recognize when it’s necessary to forgo certain intensive treatments.”

Because the root of this condition is inflammation, topical treatments should focus on reducing it while supporting the vascular system. “Vitamin C (preferably lipophilic) can be helpful, and vitamin K has been shown to stabilize vasodilation and can be an effective adjunct in topical treatments,” Sanítas’ Fuchs says. “Look for at least 5% concentration for maximum benefit.” Due to its anti-inflammatory properties, salicylic acid can be healing, he adds.

Keep in mind, precautions should be taken to prevent stimulation, which can be counterproductive. However, certain ingredients are safe for nearly all rosacea sufferers. Aloe vera, chamomile, and flax seed and evening primrose oils are commonly recommended by skincare specialists. ●

**Katherine Stewart** is a Santa Barbara, California-based freelance writer, and author of *The Yoga Mamas* and *Class Mothers* (Berkley Publishing Group 2005; 2006).