

What you need to know about Hives and Rosacea

Whilst summer brings with it a whole host of health benefits, an increase in allergies, UV rays and heat can cause havoc with our skin - particularly for those who have pre-existing skin conditions.

Our derma experts have delved into two skin conditions that are more common than you think - Hives and Rosacea - and shared common signs, triggers and management techniques for each.

Hives

What are Hives?

Hives are caused by an allergic reaction and appear as an itchy rash caused by tiny amounts of fluid that leak from blood vessels just under the skin surface. A trigger causes cells in the skin to release chemicals such as histamine. This itchy rash is also known as urticaria or as nettle rash.

Hives are not contagious. However, some people develop hives when they have a contagious disease like strep throat or a common cold.

Signs of Hives

The main symptom of hives is an itchy rash. The rash can:

- be raised bumps or patches in many shapes and sizes
- appear anywhere on the body
- be on 1 area or spread across the body
- feel itchy, sting or burn
- look pink or red when affecting someone with white skin; the colour of the rash can be harder to see on brown and black skin



Common triggers



Eating certain foods



Contact with certain plants, animals, chemicals and latex



Cold, such as cold water or wind



Hot, sweaty skin from exercise, emotional stress or eating spicy food



A reaction to a medicine, insect bite or sting



Scratching or pressing on your skin, such as wearing itchy or tight clothing



An infection



A problem with your immune system



Water or sunlight, but this is rare

Treatment

See a GP if the symptoms do not improve after two days, you're worried about your child's hives, the rash is spreading, hives keeps coming back (you may be allergic to something), you also have a high temperature and feel unwell and if you also have swelling under your skin (this might be angioedema).

A GP might prescribe menthol cream, antihistamines or steroid tablets. If hives do not go away with treatment, you may be referred to a skin specialist.

How to manage Hives

Try to find out what triggers hives for you, so you can avoid those triggers, if possible. This may help prevent an episode of hives.

Rosacea

What are Rosacea?

Rosacea is psoriasis of the face. It is a long term condition that is more common in women and people with lighter skin, but symptoms can be worse in men.

Rosacea is not caused by poor hygiene and it is not contagious. Around one in 20 people in the UK have Rosacea.

Signs of Rosacea

- Redness across your nose, cheeks, forehead, chin, neck and chest that comes and goes, usually lasting for a few minutes each time – your face may also feel warm, hot or painful
- A burning or stinging feeling when using water or skincare products
- Dry skin
- Swelling
- Yellow-orange patches on the skin
- Sore eyelids or crusts around roots of eyelashes
- Thickened skin, mainly on the nose (usually appears after many years)
- Signs of Rosacea



Common triggers



Alcohol



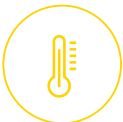
Spicy foods



Hot drinks



Sunlight

Hot or cold
temperaturesAerobic exercise,
like running

Being stressed

Treatment

Rosacea cannot be cured, but you can seek treatment from a GP to help control the symptoms. Rosacea can get worse if it's not treated.



Wear a high SPF
sunscreen of at least
SPF 30 every day



Try to avoid heat,
sunlight or humid
conditions if possible



Try to cover
your face in cold
weather



Use gentle skincare
products for
sensitive skin



Clean your eyelids
at least once a day if
you have blepharitis



Take steps to
manage stress

And finally, our tip of the month; the one thing we ask you to do today if you do nothing else...

Get to know your own skin. To spot skin cancer early it helps to know how your skin normally looks. That way, you'll notice any changes more easily. To look at areas you can't see easily, you could try using a hand held mirror and reflect your skin onto another mirror. Or you could get your partner or a friend to look. This is very important if you're regularly outside in the sun for work or leisure.

You can take a photo of anything that doesn't look quite right. If you can, it's a good idea to put a ruler or tape measure next to the abnormal area when you take the photo. This gives you a more accurate idea about its size and can help you tell if it's changing. You can then show these pictures to your doctor.

Book an appointment with your GP if you have any skin abnormality, such as a lump, ulcer, lesion or skin discolouration that has not healed after four weeks - while it's unlikely to be skin cancer, it's always best to get it checked.

