



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:

1. be raised bumps or patches in many shapes and sizes
2. appear anywhere on the body
3. be on 1 area or spread across the body
4. feel itchy, sting or burn
5. 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



A problem with your immune system



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



An infection



Water or sunlight, but this is rare



Contact with certain plants, animals, chemicals and latex



Cold, such as cold water or wind



A reaction to a medicine, insect bite or sting



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

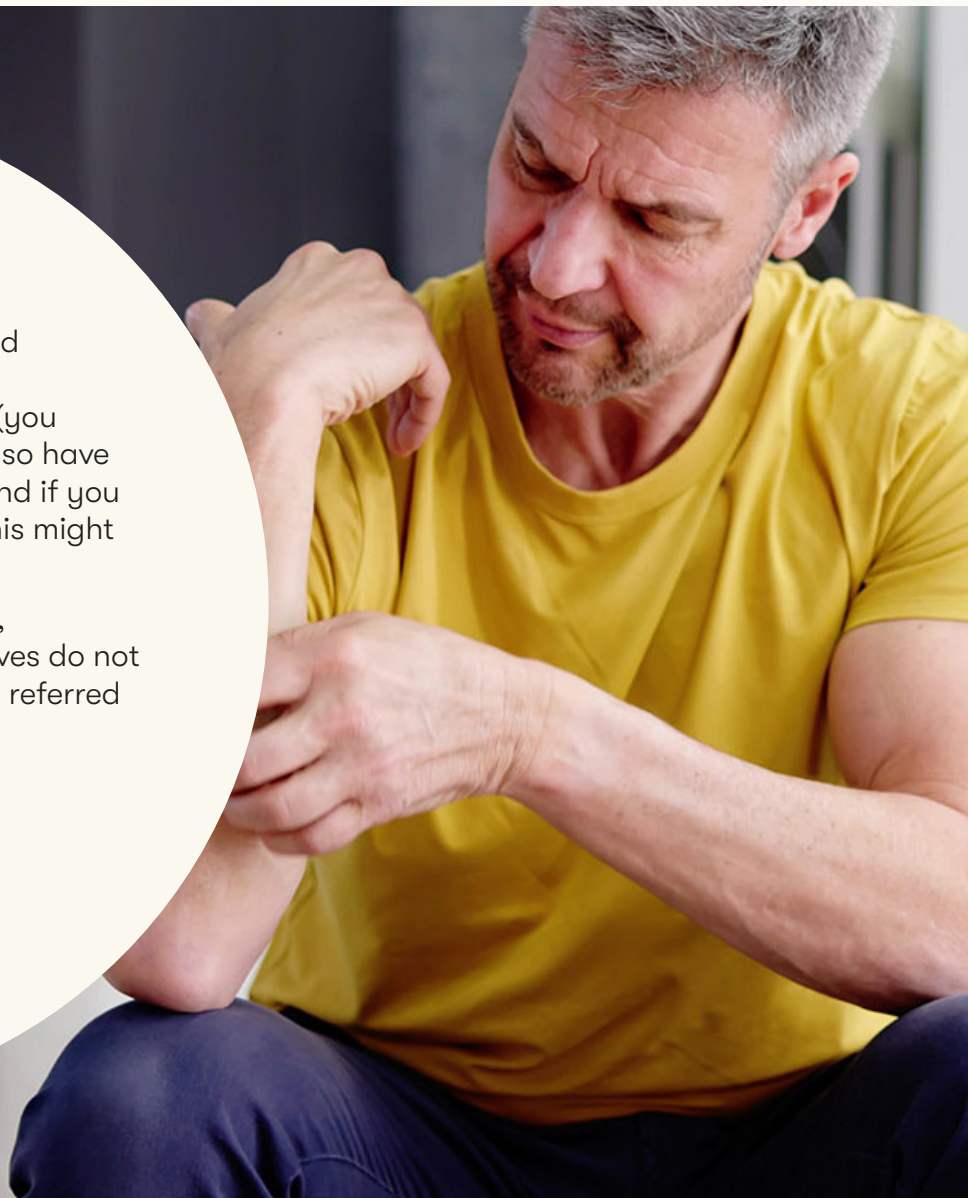
Treatment

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**
-  **Hot drinks**
-  **Hot or cold temperatures**
-  **Aerobic exercise, like running**
-  **Spicy foods**
-  **Sunlight**
-  **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.



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And finally, our tip of the month; get to know your skin.

Knowing what's normal for you makes it easier to spot changes early. Check your skin regularly, including hard-to-see areas using a mirror or with help from a partner or friend, especially if you spend a lot of time outdoors.

If you notice anything unusual, take a photo and include a ruler or tape measure to help track any changes. You can share these images with your GP.

Book an appointment if you have a lump, ulcer, lesion or skin discolouration that hasn't healed within four weeks. While it's unlikely to be skin cancer, it's always best to get it checked.

