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How to Calm Red Skin, from DIY Remedies to Pro treatments

By: Kristin Howard | February 26, 2020



Red, flushed skin can be attributed to a number of things, from warm weather to an intense workout, to simply feeling excited or embarrassed. Sometimes, redness can occur because of a skin condition, like rosacea, or other issues we can't easily see, like endocrine disorders. While some causes of redness are a bit easier to treat than others, and perhaps only require a pat-down with cool water or a calming mask, others will look to more intensive treatments with the help of a skincare pro. Whatever the case, finding a way to calm red, flushed skin can be done once you identify the cause of your redness.

We spoke with board certified dermatologist [Anna D. Guanche, MD](#) to find out why some skin types commonly experience symptoms like redness and flushing, what you can do to calm your skin when this happens, and which signs indicate an issue that may require more medical intervention.

MEET THE EXPERT

[Anna D. Guanche, MD](#) is a board-certified dermatologist and dermatologic surgeon specializing in cosmetic procedure. She is also the founder of Bella Skin Institute in Calabasas. She was selected six years consecutively as a Southern California Super Doctor by *Los Angeles* magazine.

01 Try to identify the cause of your redness.

Not all red, flushed skin can be attributed to the same cause, and not all treatments and remedies will address every issue as effectively as others. To start calming your skin, it will help



if you can pinpoint the reason for the redness. “Red, flushed skin can be caused by a myriad of factors, such as heat, emotions—like blushing due to embarrassment, medications, alcohol, rosacea, endocrine disorders, menopause, and carcinoid syndrome,” says Dr. Guanche. “Even certain vitamins can lead to redness, like niacin, which can cause transient flushing.”

02 Calm flushed skin with a cool compress.

If your red or flushed skin isn’t due to an underlying medical condition, treating it can be done by applying a cool compress to the affected area. In most cases, the skin becomes flushed as a result of the blood vessels widening in that area, which then allows for more blood to flow through them. This is why some people experience redness during exercise, when they drink alcohol, or if they become embarrassed. To calm flushed skin, place a clean washcloth in a plastic bag filled with ice cubes and leave it in the freezer for about 15 minutes. Then, remove the cloth and gently apply it to the skin for about 20 minutes before removing.

03 Look for a sheet mask with soothing ingredients.

If you don’t need to constrict your blood vessels, but seek to calm red skin that’s caused by dryness or inflammation, sheet masks make for great at-home treatments when they contain the right ingredients. Rosewater is well-known for reducing redness and calming irritated skin, is naturally packed with vitamins A, C, and E, and will leave your skin looking and smelling fantastic in mere minutes.

04 Use Visine to create a DIY color corrector.

For years, Visine has been promising to “get the red out” of our eyes, and as it turns out, that same color-correcting magic can work on skin as well. Like ice or cold water, Visine constricts blood vessels to reduce redness by restricting blood flow to the area. Many people already know that a couple of drops of Visine on an inflamed pimple can offer temporary relief from redness, and Guanche recommends implementing this practice to any affected areas of the skin by combining “a little visine mixed with moisturizer, and apply to the face.”

05 Consult your dermatologist for in-office treatments.

Sometimes, skin redness or flushing requires treatments and ingredients that at-home DIY solutions can’t offer. Laser technology has been used by dermatologists for years to treat a number of skincare concerns, from reducing acne scarring, diminishing hyperpigmentation, and even lifting sagging skin without requiring patients to go under the knife. When it comes to relieving redness, there’s a laser therapy treatment for that too. “V-Beam Laser is a non-ablative laser that produces an intense but gentle burst of light that selectively destroys the blood vessels of vascular lesions, without damaging the surrounding skin and tissue,” Guanche explains. “This laser helps with flushing as well.”



06 Look to medications to reduce redness.

If you know that the redness on your skin is caused by rosacea, you may look to certain prescription medications to treat your symptoms. **Guanche** recommends talking to your doctor about Rhofade or Mirvaso, both of which are applied as topical creams that relieve redness temporarily. If your rosacea has you feeling especially dry, a calming lotion may also provide temporary relief, with several options available over the counter. Weleda Skin Food is a rich formula that's thick enough for the hands yet gentle enough for the face, and is a skincare fave for those looking to hydrate their dry skin.

07 Steer clear of irritating products.

Sometimes, redness can be exacerbated by certain ingredients in our skincare—namely acids—which are commonly used to exfoliate the skin. “Steer clear of strong retinoids or retinols, as these products can further irritate sensitive skin, as well as harsh physical exfoliants and polishing scrubs,” says **Guanche**. “Some acne products can be drying and should be used with caution if you have sensitive skin, such as benzoyl peroxide, salicylic acid, and glycolic acids.”

If you can't part ways with your favorite acid-enhanced product, look to formulas that contain a low percentage of the good stuff. For example, many products containing glycolic acid may fall between 10-20% glycolic acid, although some, like The Ordinary Glycolic Acid 7% Toning Solution, and The Magic Pads 2% Glycolic Acid Pads are formulated with a lesser amount, which may be ideal for skin that becomes red or irritated easily.

To ensure that your red skin stays cared for, limit your use of acid-containing items to every other day, or just a few times a week, and always be sure to follow up with a moisturizer and SPF every day (even when they're cloudy!) as these skin-sloughing formulas can make complexions more prone to irritation when exposed to UV rays.

08 Reduce skin flushing from within.

In the same way that certain skincare ingredients may trigger the outer layer of the skin, some foods and drinks can inflame and irritate the skin from the inside.

“If you are prone to redness or rosacea, then you can avoid triggers such as spicy foods, citrus, tomato, chocolate, and cinnamon,” suggests **Guanche**. Additionally, she lists heat, extremes in temperatures (either hot or cold) wind exposure, alcohol, and some warm beverages as additional triggers that can lead to redness or may induce rosacea symptoms.

09 Talk to your doctor if redness persists.

If your other options have been exhausted and you still can't find relief from redness or flushing, it is always a good idea to consult your physician, especially if redness is combined with additional symptoms.



“If the red, flushed skin is associated with a rapid heart rate, sweating and/or diarrhea that is something more concerning that warrants further workup,” **Guanche** warns. “Carcinoid tumors or pheochromocytomas are tumors that can cause flushing and a racing heart, for example. Most cases of flushing, however, are just a benign genetic tendency.”

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