

October 17, 2001

## American Academy of Dermatology: Getting the **Red** Out of Rosacea

Imagine your face flushing even when you're not embarrassed. Imagine struggling with a noticeable facial skin condition that you assumed you'd outgrown. These are the challenges that adults with rosacea struggle with everyday, along with trying to cover the symptoms of this common condition. However, the visible signs of rosacea can now be successfully treated with combination therapies, such as chemical peels and lasers.

Speaking today at the American Academy of Dermatology's Derm Update 2001, dermatologist Allison T. Vidimos, MD, Staff Member, Department of Dermatology, Section of Dermatologic Surgery and Oncology, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Cleveland, Ohio, discussed the latest techniques for the successful management and treatment of rosacea.

"Rosacea can have devastating effects on self-esteem, because it strikes adults who are in the prime of their life and who often feel that this condition affects their work and social life," said Dr. Vidimos. "Therefore, treatment options need to be quick and have little downtime, ensuring that patients get back to work and their families without too much disruption."

Rosacea is a chronic and often progressive skin disease that causes redness and swelling on the face. As many as 14 million Americans have rosacea, most between the ages of 30 and 50. It most commonly affects fair-skinned individuals. Rosacea may begin as a tendency to flush or blush easily, and progress to persistent redness in the center of the face that may gradually involve the cheeks, forehead, chin, and nose. As the disease progresses, the redness becomes more severe and persistent, and small blood vessels, acne-like pimples, and nodules may become visible on the surface of the skin. Rosacea can be exacerbated by exposure to extremes of hot and cold, sunlight, emotional stress, hot beverages, alcohol, spicy foods and certain skin care products.

Treatment of rosacea includes avoidance of the known exacerbating dietary, environmental and emotional factors that may cause flare-ups, as well as utilizing smart sun safety including wearing a broad-spectrum sunscreen, protective clothing and hats, and avoiding the sun. Medical therapy includes oral and topical antibiotics.

Glycolic acid peels are often used in conjunction with antibiotics to hasten the control of rosacea. A series of peels are performed every two-to- four weeks and may be used in

combination with low concentration glycolic acid washes and creams. Glycolic acid peels for rosacea are timed and generally take three-to-five minutes. The peeled facial skin will be red for a few hours following the treatment and makeup should be avoided during this time.

While topical or oral therapies do not remove the redness on the face or reduce the appearance of dilated blood vessels associated with rosacea, vascular lasers and intense pulsed light therapy are now being used to treat these conditions.

Vascular lasers emit specific wavelengths of light targeted for the tiny visible blood vessels just under the skin. Heat from the laser's energy builds in the vessels, causing them to collapse. The newest generation of vascular lasers does not produce any bruising, but may cause redness and minimal swelling that lasts approximately 24-to-48 hours.

Intense light and laser therapy uses multiple wavelengths of light to treat dilated blood vessels in the face. Both treatments, laser and intense light and laser sources, take 15-to-30 minutes and are performed at six-to-12 week intervals. Patients may require several treatments initially, and may return annually for treatment of new blood vessels.

In advanced cases of rosacea, rhinophyma may develop, a condition that occurs when oil glands enlarge on the face and a bulbous, enlarged red nose and swollen cheeks develops. This condition usually occurs in men over 40. The excess tissue can be surgically removed using lasers, dermabrasion or electrosurgery to sculpt the nose back down to a more normal shape and appearance. These procedures may be performed on an outpatient basis using local anesthesia, and healing generally takes seven-to-10 days.

"It's important for individuals with rosacea to seek treatment early to avoid progression of the condition and avoid any permanent scarring to the face," said Dr. Vidimos. "Today's dermatology offers a variety of treatment options that can achieve successful results and fit into even the busiest lifestyle."

The American Academy of Dermatology, founded in 1938, is the largest, most influential, and most representative of all dermatologic associations. With a membership of over 13,000 dermatologists worldwide, the Academy is committed to: advancing the diagnosis and medical, surgical, and cosmetic treatment of the skin, hair and nails; advocating high standards in clinical practice, education, and research in dermatology; supporting and enhancing patient care for a lifetime of healthier skin. For more information, contact the AAD at 1-888-462-DERM or [www.aad.org](http://www.aad.org).

The American Society for Dermatologic Surgery (ASDS) was founded in 1970 to promote excellence in the field of dermatologic surgery and to foster the highest standards of patient care. The Society supports clinical and basic science research grants, provides professional continuing education of its members, and sponsors public education programs related to cosmetic, therapeutic and reconstructive skin surgery. For more information on dermatologic surgery procedures and referrals to board-certified doctors in

specific geographic areas, please contact the ASDS Consumer Hotline, 1-800-441-ASDS (2737), during weekday business hours or log on at [www.aboutskinsurgery.com](http://www.aboutskinsurgery.com).