

BEAUTY

8 Best Moisturizers for Rosacea-Prone Skin, According to Dermatologists

Go from red-faced to ravishing in a flash!

By Jené Luciani Sena | February 11, 2024



If you've experienced a rosacea flare-up, you know the drill: Your cheeks, nose, forehead and chin get suddenly bright red, resembling a sunburn, but you've been nowhere near the sun. These episodes of flushing or blushing occur especially after sipping on hot drinks, eating spicy foods, drinking alcohol or feeling stressed. Since the skin concern is characterized primarily by rosy, ruddy and sometimes rough-feeling cheeks, keeping the area moisturized is key. However, knowing which moisturizer to choose for rosacea can be challenging. Choose the wrong one, and it could just make it worse. With that in mind, we asked top dermatologists for their best moisturizer for rosacea picks — luckily there are plenty of great options!

What is rosacea?

Rosacea is a common, chronic skin condition that can cause many symptoms in the skin or eyes. "Skin involvement usually occurs around the center of the face, causing redness in the form of

frequent and prolonged flushing, papules, pustules, broken capillaries and issues with the oil glands," explains dermatologist Jodi LoGerfo, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC. It can sometimes be confused with acne.

Rosacea affects more than 14 million people in the U.S. (and most are women) and typically flares up after age 30, although it is most likely to occur between the ages of 45 and 60. There are four different types of rosacea, according to the American Academy of Dermatology, and suffering from it can negatively impact a patient's life in several ways, including embarrassment, anxiety and depression. Studies show that when people have fewer signs and symptoms of rosacea, their quality of life improves, says the AAD.

What causes rosacea?

While it's a condition that affects millions of people, it remains somewhat of a mystery to doctors. "The exact cause of rosacea is unknown, but it's thought to be a combination of hereditary and environmental factors,

the most significant of which is ultraviolet radiation from sunlight," says dermatologist **Navin S. Arora, DO, FAAD**. Dr. LoGerfo says alcohol, caffeine, spicy foods, extreme temperature fluctuations (hello hot flashes!), harsh skincare products and even psychological symptoms that cause the face to flush, like feelings of embarrassment, can all trigger rosacea.

How can moisturizer help rosacea?

"Hydration can help manage dryness and sensitivity, reduce irritation and support the skin's barrier function. A compromised skin barrier can exacerbate rosacea symptoms, making effective moisturizing an essential part of managing the condition," explains **Dr. Arora**.

What should I look for in a moisturizer for rosacea?

Experts say it's best to stick to gentle products designed for sensitive skin, which are minimalistic on extraneous ingredients for rosacea-riddled skin. "Products with alcohol, fragrance or color may be too harsh," advises Erika Luren, MA, MS, NP, founder of Parasol Aesthetics, Dermatology and Wellness. Check the label and look for ingredients that calm and soothe the skin, such as niacinamide, allantoin, ceramides and hyaluronic acid, suggests **Dr. Arora**.

Another popular ingredient found in skincare can even mimic doctor-prescribed rosacea treatments: "Going further with an active ingredient like glycolic acid in the moisturizer will help treat the rosacea. Retin-A or tretinoin are often prescribed to treat rosacea; glycolic is very similar. It can help the rosacea by promoting cell turnover and boosting collagen production," says dermatologist Richard Bottiglione, MD.

It's also a good idea to look for moisturizers that contain SPF. "All rosacea patients should be using sunblock with an SPF of 30 or higher daily as sun exposure can be more intense for these individuals than the average person," says Luren.

How often should we be moisturizing with rosacea?

Dr. Arora says consistency is key to seeing results. "Moisturize twice daily, in the morning and evening, to maintain skin hydration and barrier function," she says.

Dr. Arora also advises doing a patch test before trying any new product to ensure it doesn't irritate sensitive skin, and when in doubt, see your dermatologist for a treatment plan.



The 8 best moisturizer picks for rosacea

To compile this list, we consulted doctors to determine what moisturizers they recommend to their patients and why.



Cetaphil Redness Relieving Daily Facial Moisturizer with SPF 40 (Buy from Walmart, \$11.49)

Doctors say that people with rosacea-prone skin should wear sunscreen every day, even in the winter, and this moisturizer makes it easy because it's built right in. "I recommend this to patients because it offers gentle hydration and sun protection without irritating sensitive skin," says **Dr. Arora**.



La Roche-Posay Toleriane Double Repair with Ceramide Face Moisturizer (Buy from CVS, \$10.99)

Formulated for sensitive skin, this moisturizer contains prebiotic thermal water, ceramide-3, niacinamide and glycerin to hydrate and soothe the skin and restore its natural barrier, says **Dr. Arora**.



Aveeno Calm + Restore Redness Relief Cream (Buy from Walmart, \$19.99)

Dr. Arora is also a fan of this product by Aveeno, which contains skin-soothing ingredients like feverfew and oats. "This night cream is designed to soothe and nourish sensitive skin, reducing redness and irritation typical of rosacea," she adds.



CeraVe PM Facial Moisturizing Lotion (Buy from Amazon, \$14.99)

Luren likes this drugstore fave for its high niacinamide and hyaluronic acid content — two ingredients known to calm red and inflamed skin.



Vieve's Leaves Rejuvenating Facial Fusion Moisturizer (Buy from Vieve's Leaves, \$35)

This one utilizes key ingredients like organic aloe, peptides, chamomile and red marine algae to revitalize your skin. Its humectant properties lock moisture in, keeping your skin hydrated for longer, staving off flare-ups.



Dermatologist's Choice Facial Enhancement Cream (Buy from Dermtologist's Choice, \$85)

While a bit of a skincare splurge, this one is doctor-developed. Dr. Bottiglione created this moisturizer with the active ingredient being non-neutralized glycolic acid, which helps heal rosacea by promoting cell turnover and collagen production.



Hero Rescue Balm (Buy from Hero Cosmetics, \$29.99)

In the world of color-correcting cosmetics, green is known to counteract and cover up the redness associated with rosacea — so you don't have to cake on concealer. This twofor Rescue Balm by Hero not only moisturizes but is also tinted green to camouflage redness.

What's the best way to apply moisturizer with rosacea

To ensure we don't aggravate a rosacea flare-up or cause one to occur, **Dr. Arora** advises how to apply your moisturizer properly:

Start with a gentle, hydrating cleanser with

the above-mentioned ingredients to remove impurities without stripping the skin of its natural oils.

After cleansing, pat your skin dry with a soft towel. Avoid rubbing, which can irritate the skin.

Apply moisturizer to damp skin to help lock in moisture. This can be more effective than applying to dry skin. With

clean fingertips, gently massage it into the skin in a circular motion to boost absorption and circulation.

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