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Shopping for Sensitive Skin: A Guide for the Acne and Rosacea Conscious

By Naweko San-Joyz

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San-Joyz

Acne and rosacea patients take note– you must know about proper skin-care and cosmetic usage to successfully manage your sensitive skin. This is the counsel of Dr. Diane Berson, who runs a dermatology practice in New York City.

A critical step in reducing skin sensitivity is understanding the importance of the stratum corneum. The stratum corneum is the outermost layer of the skin and is composed of dead, flat skin cells held together by the protein keratin. This skin barrier prevents molecules from passing into and out of the skin and thereby protects the lower layers of skin while reducing skin sensitivity.

Healthy, uninjured skin is more effective at preventing skin irritations that may result from using cosmetics and skin care products. Individuals with altered nerve endings or more neurotransmitters under their skin are more susceptible to minor skin irritants in cosmetics and skin care products. When the skin is excessively dry or damaged, it cannot adequately protect these nerve endings. Sound moisturizing and a strong immune system help minimize possible skin irritants.

Some of Dr. Berson's recommendations for caring for sensitive skin include:

Selecting mild cleansers.

Use mild cleansing agents that have synthetic detergents or lipid-free cleansers. Resist using abrasive cleansers since they can cause microscopic tears in the skin and damage the protective layers of the skin.

Rosacea patients should not use alcohol-based products such as toners or astringents.

Acne patients will benefit from toners that contain salicylic acid or alpha hydroxy acid. However, when starting a retinoid treatment, temporarily discontinue using a toner or astringent since the combination may make the retinoid more irritating. Acne patients must also limit or abstain from excessively rough

cleansing and washing. Julie Harper, M.D., who directs a clinic to treat acne at the University of Alabama at Birmingham laments, "Teenagers think they have acne because they do not wash enough, but usually they are washing too often with harsh scrubs that make their symptoms worse."

Using moisturizers.

Tracy L. Grosick, a key skin care product researcher with Procter & Gamble, Cincinnati says that when the skin's moisture barrier is intact, it helps the skin to combat environmental attacks that are encountered on a daily basis. When acne and rosacea patients are using treatments that dry the skin, moisturizers may improve the skin's barrier function. Dr. Benson recommends using moisturizers with the least amount of ingredients.

Rosacea patients should choose a moisturizer with only glycerin, petrolatum, or aloe vera, which might be anti-inflammatory.

Acne patients should also stick with products containing the least amount of ingredients.

Using noncomedogenic sunscreens.

Rosacea patients need to use a physical-blocking products containing zinc oxide or titanium dioxide because these ingredients will not irritate red, inflamed skin and will provide optimal protection.

Acne patients with oily skin should use noncomedogenic, non-pore clogging, products. Select an alcohol-based or gel-based sunscreen.

Preservatives.

The best preservatives for sensitive skin are those containing parabens like methyl paraben and butyl paraben.

The key to keeping sensitive skin less susceptible to irritation is ensuring the integrity of your stratum corneum, the skin's primary defensive barrier. You can start by using a minimalist moisturizer, and noncomedogenic sunscreen.

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Naweko San-Joyz writes health and beauty articles from her home in San Diego. She recently published "Acne Messages: Crack the code of your zits and say goodbye to acne" (ISBN: 0974912204). Naweko is presently working on title called "Skinny Fat Girls, Why we're still not getting this diet thing" (ISBN: 0974912212) for release in May of 2005. To challenge and verify her research, San-Joyz trains for figure competitions.

Acne Rosacea – A Blush You Can Do Without

By Alicia Caldelas

What do former presidents Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin have in common? A condition called acne rosacea, a chronic inflammation of the blood vessels in the skin, which causes a ruddy complexion and small acne-like eruptions on the cheeks, forehead and nose.

In men it can often cause the skin on the nose to thicken and swell, leading to a condition called rhinophyma.

Nobody knows what causes it but the list of potential triggers is endless. The main culprits are alcohol and rich, spicy foods.

Because its roots are unknown, there's no permanent cure either, so management is the key. This is partly achieved by identifying what makes the rosacea worse through a process of exclusion and by the use of topical antibiotics – usually metronidazole. A GP's diagnosis is vital since the symptoms can be similar to more serious conditions such as lupus. Rosacea can last a lifetime, especially in men, but often clears up on its own.

Alicia Caldelas for

Find more info about rosacea symptoms, triggers etc. on

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