

How to treat facial redness according to Dr. Naomi Dolly

Do you struggle with red and/or swollen skin? Facial redness is very common and can be caused by a host of conditions—from rosacea to allergic reactions, or simply extra blood rushing to the skin's surface to fight off irritants and encourage healing. Facial redness causes many people self-esteem and self-confidence issues, and is often detrimental to professional and social interaction.

There are medical and non-medical approaches to improving facial redness. Medical therapy includes the application of topical creams/gels that prevent the tiny vessels in the skin from becoming larger and creating the appearance of redness. Sometimes the use of a pulsed dye laser or Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) have been sought after as a treatment.

We asked dermatologist/skin expert Doctor Naomi Dolly of Retouched by ND to set the record straight about what makes our skin red and how to get rid of it (the redness) using the various medical and non medical therapies available. Here is what she shared:

What causes facial redness?

Facial redness can be caused by multiple factors, including

- Seborrheic dermatitis
- Rosacea
- Skin irritation/allergic reaction
- Reaction to a medication
- Atopic dermatitis
- Psoriasis
- Spider veins
- Shingles
- Lupus
- Rare cancer

Not all these conditions can be treated via a topical cream or laser/IPL, and you should speak with your dermatologist.

What medical therapies are available to treat facial redness?

Avoiding triggers is the first step. Triggers are sometimes difficult to identify but some common ones include astringents, alcohols, peroxides, scrubs, acids (for example, glycolic acid, salicylic acid), direct sun exposure, heat, coffee and spicy foods.

The next step is to use topical and oral antibiotics (such as metronidazole, tetracyclines) and medications that make the tiny, dilated vessels shrink (for example Brimonidine (Mirvaso) and oxymetazoline (Rhofade) and mild topical steroids. Useful cosmeceutical agents include niacinamide,

topical antioxidants (for example, green tea, caffeine, and ferulic acid). Don't forget to wear sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher when in the sun.

Vitamin A drugs are worth a mention here as there is often debate on their usefulness. Although oral formulations (for example, roaccutane, iso-tretinoin) are used to treat severe forms of rosacea and acne, topical retinoids (Retin-A, Differin, Deriva, tretinoin) and retinols can aggravate sensitive skin.

If these methods fail, consider laser/ IPL.

How are IPL and VBeam treatments effective for facial redness?

IPL stands for Intense pulsed light and is used to treat redness, age spots, freckles, sun damage and more. It's not a laser, but a band of light that targets certain colours, for example, IPL devices that treat redness target the colour red; treatments that target age spots target brown, etc. Laser, on the other hand, stands for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation and it uses a single focused wavelength of light energy to target a certain colour. The pulsed dye laser—PDL (Vbeam perfecta), delivers controlled pulses of laser energy into the skin with specific wavelengths of light calibrated to destroy unwanted vessels in the skin.



Can people with dark or olive skin tones treat facial redness the same way?

Facial redness is more difficult to see in darker skin types but it's still a complaint of many. Darker skin types should be cautious of getting IPL and PDL as darker skin absorbs more light energy, increasing chances of unwanted side effects, such as hyperpigmentation, blistering and burns. Choose a dermatologist who has experience with darker skin types.

Is there downtime for either IPL or PDL treatment?

You will be able to complete all of your daily tasks. However, right after the procedure and up to about a week after, you may prefer to avoid social settings for cosmetic reasons. Post treatment, expect redness, tenderness and swelling for 48 hours to one week, bruising or dark purple-appearing skin and crusting or scabbing skin for about



a week. But these side effects can be covered up with makeup, so you can return to work once comfortable enough.

Which treatment is safer?

Both treatments are equally safe, and FDA approved; it depends on your individual factors.

What can you do to avoid/reduce facial redness?

Certain people are predisposed to redness, especially those with fair skin. However, external factors can make it. Here are some things to avoid:

- Over-exfoliating
- Overuse of retinoids,
- Trauma (pimple popping)
- Extreme temperatures (hot showers)
- Extensive UV Exposure
- Spicy foods
- Alcohol, especially red wine
- Stress

Some makeup products and techniques may help reduce the appearance of skin redness. Try powder cosmetics with a green tone and matte finish.



For more information on skincare procedures, visit <http://www.retouchedbynd.com/>
Follow Retouched by ND on Facebook and @dr.naomidollymd on Instagram

