

Dietary Influences & Skin Conditions

Eczema & Rosacea

Sometimes people find it hard to believe that what you put in your mouth can affect the condition of your skin. But if you suffer from the skin conditions eczema or rosacea, you probably have noticed a direct link between the foods and beverages you consume and flare-ups of your condition, especially in combination with stress factors. My own experience with eczema has convinced me that certain foods I eat or don't eat dramatically contribute to my eczema flares. And in my work as a holistic skincare therapist I often notice a clear link between the rosacea flare-ups and dietary habits of my clients who suffer from the disorder.

Like all skin conditions, eczema and rosacea should be diagnosed by a physician. Dr. Rudolf Hauschka, the German chemist who developed a safe and stable process of preserving cosmetic preparations without chemicals, defined eczema as "chronic, non-contagious inflammation of the skin characterized by redness, itch-

ing, and the presence of lesions that may become encrusted, either dry or moist." According to Dr. Hauschka, as the organs of elimination, the kidneys and liver become overtaxed, function slows and the skin must assist in the elimination processes, often appearing as eczema. People who develop eczema at an early age often suffer from it always, although its symptoms can be controlled through lifestyle changes, as I can attest.

According to Dr. Hauschka, there are three distinct forms of eczema: dry, wet, and neurodermatitis. All are conditions of slowed detoxification processes. Dry eczema can result when the subtle metabolic functions of the liver are impaired. Toxins from smoke, alcohol, excess sugar, and dietary proteins overtax the liver, which must then rely on the skin for increased elimination functions. And from a holistic perspective, wet eczema points to an imbalance in the eliminatory functions of the kidneys. Both dry and wet eczema manifest as raised, red, itchy patches. Neurodermatitis, also known as lichen planus, is a type of eczema which, according to holistic perspectives, signals a nervous system overload. This type of eczema looks slightly different than dry or wet, appearing like scales of lichen on a tree, often accompanying times of unmanaged stress and indicative of an imbalance in the intestinal flora. When considering the symptoms of these conditions, our fast-paced, modern lifestyle clearly contributes to the development of eczema conditions.

Dry eczema can benefit from dietary changes such as shifting from heavy red meats and cheeses to potassium-rich foods such as millet, bitter greens, bananas, and whole grains, along with incorporating cleansing foods such as dandelion greens, which can assist the elimination processes of both the liver and therefore the skin. Wet eczema can benefit from dietary adjustments such as inclusion of more raw foods, fish (rich in essential fatty acids), and sea vegetables as well as the avoidance of heavy red meats and cheeses.

Watermelon is especially beneficial in assisting the cleansing processes of the kidneys, and wet eczema further benefits from a diet high in silica (found in the herbs nettle and horsetail), an essential element of healthy connective tissue. Neurodermatitis, the third type of eczema, benefits from avoiding fermented or fungus-based foods such as wine, dairy, yeast, and all mushrooms, in addition to refined flour and sugar products, including all forms of processed foods.

The holistic skin care principles of Dr. Hauschka indicate there are four stages of rosacea, the first commonly known as couperose. In this stage, a few distinct tiny red veins, which may look like spiderwebs, begin to appear, generally first around the borders of the nostrils. These webs of capillaries may move laterally into the cheeks as the condition moves into stage two, which involves more and more inflammation of the venous structures as the ability to tolerate stimuli decreases. Stage two of rosacea comes in two forms: total inflammation of the face or inflammation that is localized, creating the appearance of a mask, sometimes associated with pregnancy. The third stage of rosacea is known as acne rosacea and occurs with the appearance of pustules that can range from tiny and white to deep red and widely inflamed. The fourth and final stage involves the inflammation of the nose, which can appear swollen and purple (think W. C. Fields).

Just like eczema, rosacea symptoms often develop as a sensitivity or intolerance to extremes of stimuli such as overwork, stress, weather, and temperature (imagine cold, windy Chicago), excessive consumption of heavy red meats, cheeses, sugars, spicy foods, and alcohol (especially fermented foods including wines, beers, and vinegars), all of which can create intolerances leading to rosacea. Rosacea symptoms are often first noticed as a flushing of the skin caused by too much blood flow to a specific area of the face as capillaries expand from stimuli.

Generally, there are two types of personalities which have a tendency to develop rosacea: the passionate type, who is by nature highly stimulated, often loving and seeking out the very foods and behaviors which trigger symptoms, and delicate types, who are simply highly sensitive. The passionate type may be referred to as "thick skinned," whereas the delicate types may "wear their hearts on their sleeves." Both are conditions of the extreme.



Dark greens assist the body's inherent detoxifying processes.

Both rosacea and eczema are systemic conditions (affecting the body in general) and are holistically considered symptoms of an inner imbalance. Although both are generally persistent conditions, they can be managed with lifestyle changes which reduce extremes of stimuli, including overwork, stress, and dietary imbalances. Both conditions benefit from avoidance of heavy red meats, cheeses, and sugars. If you suffer from either condition, instead incorporate leafy greens, mineral-rich herbs, and whole grains into your diet to assist your natural elimination functions. Intense exercise should be limited and balanced with calming movement forms such as Tai Chi and yoga, which can regulate the nervous functions, as can breath work. Viewing eczema and rosacea conditions as signals of imbalance, we can shift the behaviors which set the stage for these conditions and effectively manage their symptoms holistically.

Carmen McManus obtained a degree in Holistic Studies from Vermont College and is a Certified Dr. Hauschka Holistic Skin Care Therapist. She began her career locally as a massage therapist in 1992 and currently coordinates the staff of certified skin, massage, and nail therapists at Bloom Organics, located at 2065 Siesta Dr. Call 941-362-4194.



Beauty Element of the Month - Calendula

Beauty Plant Profile – Calendula

Scientific name: *calendula (marigold) officinalis L*
Family: *compositae/asteraceae (the daisy family)*
Genus: *calendula (a.k.a., pot marigold)*



Calendula is an annual or perennial herbaceous plant from the daisy family with an estimated 12 to 20 species and is native to the Mediterranean and Persian regions. The Saxons regarded calendula as representation of the sun god. The name in Latin (*kalendae*, meaning first day of the month) was probably assigned to the flower since it curiously tends to bloom at the beginning of most months of the year.

The fast-growing blooms range from bright yellows to deep oranges and vibrant reds throughout the summer and into the fall. Gardeners love the flowers, which produce a spicy aroma, for their ease and versatility. Marigold blooms are often added to salads for color and are interestingly also added to chicken feed to enhance the color of egg yolks.

One of the most widely used and most effective medicinal plants, calendula (*marigold*) *officinalis L* was recognized by ancient healers for its ability to absorb and retain the potent healing energies of the sun. Blooms open at approximately 9am and close around 3pm, harnessing the most intense solar energies which stimulate the plant to produce powerful healing substances. The botanical constituents of calendula include essential oils, saponins, carotenoids, bitter compounds, and flavonoids.

Calendula has been used extensively throughout Europe to heal wounds, reduce inflammation, and to treat bruises, cuts, and skin ulcers. Due to its potent healing properties, calendula is ideal for skin care and is found in Dr. Hauschka's Cleansing Cream, Clarifying Toner, Lip Balm, Moisturizing Day Cream, Normalizing Day Oil, Revitalizing Eye Cream, and in Eminence Organic Skin Care's Calendula Oil for Sensitive Skin.

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Fall Calendar of Events:

9/27 - Dr. Hauschka Decorative Cosmetics

10/18 - Beauty Inside & Out, a day of beauty to benefit SPARCC & All Faith's Food Bank

10/29 - Beyond Botox, Homeopathic Cosmetic Injections

11/16 & 17 - Efest at Sarasota Polo Grounds

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