

HERBAL TREATMENT OF ROSACEA

Q. I am a woman in my 30's and I suffer from Rosacea. Are there any herbs to help this condition?

A. What is Rosacea?

It is a chronic skin condition that causes redness of the central part of the face and spots that look similar to acne. Sometimes the eyes can be affected. It tends to affect women who are aged between 30 and 50. Women are more likely than men to have it.

Skin problems and reactions are usually a sign or symptom of what is going on *inside* your body. Therefore treatment should ideally involve diet and medicines taken internally as well as what you put on your skin.

The cause is not known but there are some theories. One suggestion is that there may be a problem with the digestive system - either low levels of stomach acid or a harmful bacteria called *Helicobacter* in the stomach. Another theory is the presence of a parasite, the Demodex mite, which can block the pores of the skin or leave bacteria that cause infection.

There is a high incidence of rosacea sufferers who are prone to migraine headaches. Stress, anxiety and depression (sometimes resulting in low stomach acid) or a food intolerance could be a cause of either of these problems.

Exposure to the sun's UV rays seems to make rosacea symptoms worse, so use a good sunscreen when you are outside, even if it is not sunny.

Diet

Avoid or cut out coffee, spicy foods, and alcohol and any food or drink that you notice causes flushing of your face. As there is inflammation going on, eat foods containing anti-oxidants such as fresh fruit and vegetables. Drinking **green tea** may be beneficial as it is high in anti-oxidants.

Herbs

There are quite a few herbs that may help your condition.

Try a soothing face wash or face pack containing **oatmeal**. You can buy these or make your own. Mix a handful of oatmeal and some warm water into a paste, apply and leave on for 10-15 minutes before rinsing off.

Chamomile tea is a good anti-inflammatory. Make a cup of double-strength chamomile tea, cover and leave to infuse for 15 minutes. When it is cool enough, you can add 2 drops each of **Tea tree** and **Lavender** essential oils and 1 drop of **Camphor** essential oil and a spoonful of milk.

Use this as a lotion for your face. Keep it in the fridge and use within 3 to 4 days.

Several other herbs that a herbalist might use in creams and lotions are **Liquorice, Horsechestnut, Plantain, Marigold, Yarrow and Elderflower.**

You can get advice from your local herbalist who will be able to make you up a suitable cream.

It is advisable to consult a qualified practitioner before using herbs.

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