

Health & wellbeing

Great advice to keep you happy and healthy

Q. I have a red, hot rash on my cheeks which doesn't seem to be improving. I'm fifty-five – could this be rosacea?



Dr Zainab Laftah, Consultant Dermatologist and British Skin Foundation spokesperson, is here to help.

Rosacea is a common inflammatory skin condition, which affects the central part of the face, typically starting between the age of thirty to sixty years. There may be a burning and stinging sensation, and flushing.

As the condition progresses the redness may become more fixed.

Pimples can develop and small blood vessels in the skin may become more visible.

Treatment is targeted toward each subtype of rosacea. Measures include avoiding exacerbating factors like spicy foods, alcohol, hot showers/baths and warm environments.

To help your skin feel more comfortable, use a gentle cleanser, avoid oil-based facial creams, and use water-based make-up. Applying a daily sunscreen will also reduce the risk of flare-ups caused by sunlight.

A rash on the cheeks can be due to other causes, therefore it is advisable to see a dermatologist who will recommend a tailored treatment.



In The News

Phase Out Fizz

Experts have long warned about the health problems associated with too much sugar in the diet, but new research into the dietary habits of people aged over forty has shown that just one fizzy drink a day is enough to raise your risk of heart disease.

Doctors say the regular intake of sugary drinks drive up levels of dangerous fats – called triglycerides – in the blood.

These collect in the blood vessels and become a major cause of heart attacks and strokes. People who drink one 350ml can, or bottle, of sugar-sweetened drink a day are 53% more likely to have dangerously high levels of fat in their blood.

Make-up Bag Bugs

If your make-up bag contains old favourites you've had for years, they could be harbouring harmful bacteria which could lead to a nasty infection. Here's when to replace:

- **Liquid foundation** – 6-12 months (using a finger or brush introduces bacteria to the formula with each use)
- **Cream eyeshadow** – 1-2 years (or sooner if the texture becomes clumpy)
- **Lipstick** – 12 months (or immediately if you get a cold sore)
- **Powder** – 2 years (but clean your brushes regularly to ensure it lasts longer)
- **Liquid eyeliner** – 3 months (they dry out quickly)
- **Pencil eyeliner** – 2 years (regular sharpening will shave away germs)
- **Mascara** – 4-6 months (or immediately after an eye infection)



Health Bite

There is growing scientific support for the benefits of live yoghurt, because it delivers friendly bacteria to the gut. However, if you are lactose intolerant, or you prefer to avoid dairy products, coconut yoghurt provides a useful alternative.

It is made from coconut milk (created by blending the white flesh of a coconut) to which a probiotic bacteria has been added. Although it can be higher in calories than ordinary yoghurt, it is both delicious and a great source of beneficial bacteria to keep your gut microbiome diverse and happy.

Tune Out To Tune In

Switch off the radio if you're trying to concentrate properly on a conversation or task.

The frontal cortex area of the brain which is involved in focusing is the last part to develop when we are children, but the first area to deteriorate as we age.

That is why we can find it increasingly hard to concentrate on some conversations or tasks if there is any noise in the background.

Psychologists warn that turning down the volume might not be enough – you might need to switch it off completely to concentrate properly on what's being said.



Stand up more often daily

On Your Feet For Fitness



Our Health Writer, Louise Atkinson, finds out the benefits.

reasons standing can increase your life expectancy is because it evens out the blood sugar peaks and troughs that put you at risk of obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

April 24 is "On Your Feet Britain" day, a health initiative designed to encourage us all to stand up more often and move around at regular intervals throughout the day.

Whether you sign up for this challenge to reduce your daily sitting time or not, there are lots of ways you can reduce the time you spend sitting and glean the health benefits of being just a little bit more active – without having to raise a sweat.

Studies show that regularly interrupting long periods of sitting with mini bouts of activity (one minute every 30 minutes) could be better for your overall health than a daily 30-minute walk.

Many wearable activity trackers can be programmed to buzz every 30 minutes to prompt you to get out of your chair and circle your arms or spend a few minutes marching on the spot.

You can always set your mobile phone to ping you an alert at intervals throughout the day as a reminder to stand up and have a stretch.

Professor Buckley recommends taking every opportunity to minimise TV time, too, because every hour you're not in front of a screen is better for every aspect of your health.

One simple trick is keep the remote control out of reach so you have to get up and move a little every time you need to change the channel – or make a point of standing up every time the adverts come on.

For more information about "On Your Feet Britain" see www.activeworking.com

No matter how diligent you are about protecting your health, it can be difficult to find the time and the energy even to get close to the recommended daily activity guidelines of 30 minutes.

However, the latest research shows most of us could see significant health improvements simply by spending a little less time sitting down.

A big study last year warned that we are spending too much time sitting – either at a desk or in front of the TV – and that this sedentary behaviour is increasing our risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and even cancer.

Experts now say our increasingly sedentary lifestyle can be as bad for our health as smoking.

Researchers at Queen's University in Belfast warned recently that inactivity is killing 70,000 people in the UK and costing the NHS £700 million every year.

I spoke to Dr John Buckley, Professor of Applied Exercise Science at University Centre Shrewsbury, who has been leading cutting-edge studies about the health benefits of standing.

He says standing not only lowers blood pressure for the time that you're upright – and long-term in people with high blood pressure – but also regulates blood glucose levels, which would normally rise sharply after a meal.

He is convinced one of the main

Rise And Shine

If you dread the jarring sound of the alarm clock wrenching you out of sleep every morning, a "wake-up light" might provide a gentle alternative.

These devices gradually brighten to rouse you gently from sleep. Some can be set to create a fading sunset in your bedroom when you go to bed.

This helps to reset the internal clock that controls your body's sleep and wake rhythms.

Studies show the lights can improve the quality of sleep, as well as boosting mood, energy and productivity for the rest of the day.

Lumie Bodyclock Rise 100, £79 from John Lewis or www.lumie.com.

