

Ask Dr. Mikell

By Dr. Oswald Mikell

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Here's to a healthy holiday glow!

'Tis the season for good cheer, good friends, good food ... but for many of us, there's a good chance that our skin conditions will worsen.

Stress, cold weather, overindulgence, and winter viruses come hand-in-hand with the holidays, but fortunately treatment and lifestyle tips can help.

Q: What can I do to manage my rosacea over the holidays?

A: The holidays can pose some hurdles for rosacea sufferers. The changing weather, combined with a heavy social calendar, can wreak havoc on rosacea. Here are a few suggestions to navigate the holiday season successfully.

- Now more than ever is the time to use your rosacea medication.
- A hectic schedule can lead to stress inducing flare-ups. Get plenty of rest, eat right, maintain a daily exercise routine and above all - don't over-commit yourself.
- Holiday cooking can quickly heat up the kitchen and lead to a rosacea flare-up. Keep a damp towel nearby to pat your face, and take a break to a cooler part of the house when you can.

Q: I'm worried that my Psoriasis might flare up over the holidays.

A: Between the physical discomfort of your skin lesions and concern about camouflaging your condition or handling people's remarks and stares, holiday stress can cause your psoriasis symptoms to worsen. Stress-reduction therapies, like massage or yoga may be beneficial. And, despite the temptation, it's in your best interest to avoid going overboard with holiday indulgences. Following a healthy lifestyle - eating healthy foods and getting regular exercise will help keep your body in shape and may make psoriasis treatments more effective.

Q: What can I do about chapped lips?

A: Chapped lips are always a problem in the winter because your lips do not have hair follicles or oil glands to protect them like the rest of your skin. Try making moisturizing your lips as a part of your regular skin care routine, carry a lip balm or use a lipstick (especially one with SPF protection and added moisturizers) - and try to remember, licking your lips only makes it worse!

Q: Every year I seem to break out right at the holidays and I end up popping the pimples.

A: We've all done it, popped the pimple then regretted it when we saw the red blotchy mark it left. Popping a pimple can make things worse, irritating it further, spreading the bacteria and even leaving a permanent scar. **Instead, wash the problem area with a gentle cleanser. Avoid irritants such as** oily or greasy cosmetics, sunscreens, hairstyling products or blemish concealers. Use products labeled "water-based" or "noncomedogenic." And, **try to avoid** resting your hands or objects (like cell phones) on your face.

The good news is that there are steps you can take (that don't include hibernating through the holiday season) to help your skin look its best. If you need aggressive treatment for any skin condition, call Dermatology Associates of the Lowcountry (843) 689-5259

Happy Holidays from Dr. Mikell and the staff of Dermatology Associates of the Lowcountry!