

Hydroquinone Patient Instructions

What is hyper-pigmentation?

Skin darkening is called epidermal hyper-pigmentation and is caused by the deposit of too much melanin (normal skin pigment) in the skin. *Melasma* is blotchy brown discoloration of the face caused by pregnancy, birth control, normal female hormones and is exacerbated by the sun. The discoloration is frequently worsened by very small amounts of sunlight. *Lentigines* are brown spots induced by sun exposure.

Post Inflammatory Hyper-pigmentation, or PIH, is the medical term given to discoloration of the skin that follows an inflammatory wound. It is the skin's natural response to inflammation and is seen commonly with acne patients. With any of these conditions response to treatment is variable and partially depends on the depth of the discoloration. Darkening may occur again at a later date especially with further sun exposure.

What is hydroquinone topical?

Hydroquinone decreases the formation of melanin in the skin. Melanin is the pigment in skin that gives it a brown color. Hydroquinone topical is used to lighten areas of darkened skin such as freckles, age spots, Chloasma, and Melasma. It works by inhibiting an enzyme reaction in skin cells.

How should I use hydroquinone topical?

Do not use hydroquinone topical on skin that is sunburned, dry, chapped, or irritated, or on an open wound. It could make these conditions worse. Discontinue use if excessive irritation develops. Apply the medication to clean, dry skin. Dispense a pea size amount on the back of your hand, apply to cheeks, forehead and then to chin. Blend in the product to cover face. Avoid the corners of the mouth and nose; these areas can be irritated easily. Apply to the affected area(s) morning and night. For Melasma, once the discoloration has resolved or adequately faded, you may either discontinue use or continue weekly maintenance. It may take 3 months or more to see improvements. For Lentigines, use the creams for a maximum of 3 months.



Warning: Only treat areas that your dermatologist has specifically evaluated. For individual brown lesions (Lentigines), the maximum duration of therapy should be 3 months. Lentigines are benign lesions; however, in some cases, they may evolve into skin cancer. Any lesion that persists, recurs or changes in any way (darkening, thickening, and enlarging) should be re-evaluated by your dermatologist.



Warning: Before using hydroquinone topical, tell your doctor if you are allergic to any drugs, or if you have liver or kidney disease.



Warning: This medication may be harmful to an unborn baby. DO NOT USE this medication if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant during treatment.



Warning: It is not known whether hydroquinone topical passes into breast milk or if it could harm a nursing baby. Do not use this medication if you are breast-feeding a baby.



Warning: Avoid exposure to sunlight or artificial UV rays. Use a sunscreen (minimum SPF 30) and wear protective clothing if you must be out in the sun.



Get emergency medical help if you have any of these signs of an allergic reaction: hives, difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.



Stop using hydroquinone topical and call your doctor if you have severe burning, stinging, or other irritation of your skin after apply the medication.