



Lentigines/Melasma Post-Inflammatory Hyperpigmentation

Skin darkening is called epidermal hyperpigmentation 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 pills, normal female hormones and is exacerbated by the sun. The discoloration is frequently worsened by very small amounts of sunlight. **Lentigines** (age spots, liver spots) are brown spots induced by sun exposure and is most often seen on the face and backs of the hands.

Treatment is difficult and the response to treatment is variable and partly depends on the depth of the discoloration. Darkening may occur again at a later date especially with further sun exposure. Melasma associated with pregnancy may improve after delivery.

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 or recurs or changes in any way (darkening, thickening, enlarging) should be re-evaluated by your dermatologist. Therapy options are listed below.

Warning: Other than sunscreens and glycolic acid products, DO NOT use any therapy listed below if you are attempting pregnancy or might be pregnant.

Sunscreens:

Use at least a 30+ SPF broad-spectrum sunscreen in the summer and a daily year-round 15+ SPF moisturizer or foundation. Be sure that your sunscreen contains adequate UVA spectrum coverage as UVA radiation is a significant factor in the discoloration. Micronized zinc oxide, titanium dioxide, Helioplex and mexoryl are some of the ingredients which maximize UVA coverage.

Bleaching Creams - Prescription strength hydroquinones:

- Lustra, Solaquin Forte and Solage should be used in the morning and evening.
- Blue Ridge Dermatology Associates, P.A. offers a prescription 4% hydroquinone gel or cream for \$59.

Apply these products all over the affected areas (face and hands). It can lighten normal surrounding skin if not applied carefully. Discontinue if excessive irritation develops. 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.

Prescriptions for these products may cost in the range of \$100. You may want to consult our Cosmetic Consultant or a pharmacist for over-the-counter alternatives.

Retinoids:

Retin-A, Tazorac or Renova should be used all over the affected area every night.

Finacea/Azelaic Acid:

Prescription products which can improve acne and dark spots.

Glycolic Acid Products and Chemical Peels:

Please ask our Cosmetic Consultant for more information.

IPL Laser:

An alternative used to treat lentigines. It has been less successful with melasma. If interested, please ask your dermatologist if this is an option for you.