

BROWN SPOTS AND MELASMA

Melasma is a common skin problem that causes brown to gray-brown patches most commonly on the face. Most people get it on their cheeks, bridge of their nose, forehead, chin and above their upper lip. Sun exposure triggers melasma. So, you must practice good sun protection to improve the appearance of this condition. This means wearing sunscreen with SPF 30 every day and reapplying every 2 hours. We recommend wearing a wide-brimmed hat when outside. Women are far more likely than men to get melasma. Since hormones also a trigger factor, melasma is common during pregnancy. Melasma can fade on its own. This often happens when melasma is triggered by hormones from pregnancy or birth control pills. In these instances, melasma often fades by giving birth or stopping birth control pills

HOW DO WE TREAT MELASMA?

Sunscreen: This is the most important step in melasma treatment. Physical sunscreens containing Titanium Dioxide and Zinc Oxide provide the best protection. **Melashade Facial Moisturizer SPF 30 (\$45)** and **Colorescience Sunscreen Powder (\$50)** are two superior sunscreen products we carry here in our office

Bleaching Treatments: This is a common first treatment for melasma. It is applied to the skin and works by lightening the skin. Over 4-6 weeks the treatment slowly can lighten brown spots. Two forms of prescription bleaching products are available in our office are **Kojalac Pads (\$75)** and **Tri-luma Cream (\$120)**. Speak with your provider to see which product is best for you.

If a topical medication does not get rid of your melasma, a procedure may be the next step. Procedures for melasma include chemical peels and laser treatments.

Chemical Peels: Chemical peel acids like alpha-hydroxy and beta-hydroxy are utilized to slough off dead skin cells and "peel" the top layer of skin. This removes many brown spots on the face. Patients may experience a light peeling of the skin for a few days after the procedure. It may take several months and several treatments to obtain the desired results. \$150-\$500/treatment (depending on strength of the peel)

Laser Treatments: The MixTo MicroFractional laser is a fractional Carbon Dioxide laser used to improve wrinkles, acne scars and at lighter settings effectively remove superficial layers of the skin where most brown spots reside. In most cases only one treatment is needed but for severe treatments multiple treatments may be necessary. Typical downtime for this treatment is 4-7 days. Cost \$1,500-\$2,000 for full face treatment.

Talk to your provider to see what treatment is best for you.