

Melasma

Melasma is a common problem of facial hyperpigmentation that usually affects women, especially in those with darker skin. It affects both sides of the face, especially the cheeks, bridge of the nose and forehead, and the upper lip



Who is affected by melasma?

Melasma occurs mostly in people with colored skin, 90% of them are women.
Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa are the most affected regions

What is the cause of melasma?

- Although the exact cause is not known, the affected people often have a family history of melasma
- A change in the hormonal state, in particular associated with pregnancy and taking birth control pills, is commonly associated with melasma, often referred to as "pregnancy mask".
- Exposure to sunlight and normal day light is one of the most common causes of melasma.
- Ultraviolet light from the sun and visible light from the bulbs can stimulate pigment-producing cells in the skin called melanocytes to produce more pigment.
- Melanocytes are particularly active in those with brown skin. Even small amounts of exposure to light, such as driving in a car or walking can stimulate melasma
- Skin irritation can produce brown color as it heals and any irritation affecting the face may exacerbate melasma.
- Although the melasma can cause stress and affect the quality of life, it is not associated with any internal diseases.

How do I know if I have melasma?

Because of its distinctive appearance, melasma can be easily diagnosed by a patient or a dermatologist.
A skin biopsy may sometimes be necessary in order to distinguish melasma from other conditions.

What are the best melasma treatments?

Many treatments are available, but there is no one treatment for all patients.
While some patients suffer from melasma for only a few weeks, many people have years or decades.
The melasma associated with pregnancy usually improves within a few months after delivery, but in sunny climates the pigmentation may persist for many years.
Sunscreen creams are very important in any treatment plan. Broad spectrum sunscreens should be used, which give UVA & UVB protection. Daily use of sunscreens is important, because even small doses of light can worsen melasma.

You may need to stop the oral contraceptive pill if it causes melasma.

Makeup creams should be stopped if possible, and the skin in general should be treated gently

Seeing a dermatologist can lead to a successful outcome as he is the only person able to properly evaluate the problem. Treating melasma is difficult and takes a long time, both from the doctor and the patient. The treatment should be specific to each individual, according to a clinical examination.

Melasma is usually treated with regular and daily use of sunscreen, topical whitening creams, or various types of chemical peels, as the attending physician deems appropriate.

When should the laser be used to treat melasma? ... the answer is only after trying a powerful topical treatment regimen and routine. This is because there is no effective laser treatment without side effects, especially given the high rates of recurrence of the problem after using the laser