



# Arab Woman Empowerment Platform

HEALTH & FITNESS

## Understanding and Treating Skin hyperpigmentation



If you have dark or light patches on your skin, chances are high that you have a manifestation of hyperpigmentation. Having this kind of uneven skin tone can be very upsetting. This should not be so because there are steps that can be taken to treat hyperpigmentation.

Hyperpigmentation is described as the production of excess melanin, which leads to the appearance of uneven skin tone, or dark spots on your skin. Although it is not a serious or life threatening condition, it can cause one to be embarrassed or bothered by their looks.

Common in both men and women, according to Lola Ali Muhammad – Medical Aesthetician at Dubai Cosmetic Surgery clinic, hyperpigmentation is caused by a number of factors, some of which we are not aware of. Just like many other conditions, in order to get rid of the uneven skin tone, you have to know the cause.

### Common causes of Skin hyperpigmentation

**Sun exposure:** This is considered the most common cause of hyperpigmentation. By over exposing yourself to the harmful UV rays of the sun, you are exposing your skin to age spots and severe uneven skin tone. These spots appear mostly on the face, hands, and legs; parts of the body which are mostly

kept uncovered. How you can avoid this: Lola recommends proper protection of your skin from the sun. This includes using a high spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of



at least 30+, minimize the time spent in the sun, and always wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your face. “When it comes to the sunscreen, it is important to use it even when there is no sun in sight because these UV rays can still penetrate your skin unseen.”

**Hormonal Imbalance:** Hormonal fluctuations can lead to melasma, which is a type of skin hyperpigmentation, also known as a pregnancy mask. These hormone imbalances can be brought on by birth control pills, pregnancy and thyroid dysfunction. Almost 90% of all pregnant women suffer from this, so it is nothing to be seriously worried about.

**Prevention:** If your hyperpigmentation is as a result of pregnancy, Lola recommends waiting until after birth to see if it disappears, which can happen within the first six months after birth. “If it is caused by birth control pills, it would be a good idea to have a chat with your doctor about having a different brand. And if the hormone imbalance is caused by thyroid dysfunction, you should have it checked by a physician.

**Genetics:** There are people who are genetically predisposed to hyperpigmentation of the skin. “Since one cannot prevent this type of cause, he or she should seek treatment for the discoloration,” says Lola.

**Certain medications:** There are certain medicines which lead to hyperpigmentation, and these include certain anti-cancer drugs, some antibiotics, and certain anti-seizure drugs. “Normally hyperpigmentation caused by medication starts to show within six months of taking the drug,” explains Lola adding that if this is the cause, you should see your doctor for a change to a different kind of medication.

**Injuries to the skin:** This type of hyperpigmentation known as Post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation comes about due to certain skin injuries which can be caused by acne vulgaris, inflammation, psoriasis and even burns.

### Treatments for hyperpigmentation

Although hyperpigmentation cannot be cured, it can be treated with several topical products, skin peels and lasers, which include but not limited to:

**Dermamelan and Cosmelan skin depigmentation treatments:** The treatment is applied as a cream mask whereby the person can leave the clinic skin2 (1) while wearing it. He/she washes it off with water after a couple of hours then follows further instructions from the doctor in charge. Only one session is recommended in this treatment.

**Fractional Laser:** High energy light is used to zap the affected area reducing the pigmentation marks. By using fractional laser therapy, the deep layers of the skin are targeted and this promotes skin renewal and encourages production of new collagen. You also get an added benefit of skin rejuvenation.

**Chemical peels:** This is a non-invasive treatment option that involves the topical application of certain skin chemicals which work by peeling off the top layer of the skin to reveal clear, healthy, and glowing skin. These come in different strengths depending on the severity of the hyperpigmentation.

**Oral Medications:** These can also be used as a treatment option for hyperpigmentation, but only for certain cases, not all.

**Skin creams:** These topical creams are only used to treat superficial pigmentation that affects only the upper layer of the skin. There are an array of them in the market today and for one to work it has to consist of agents like hydroquinone, kojic acid, retinoids, and azelaic acid.

**Home remedies for hyperpigmentation**

### Home remedies for hyperpigmentation

**Lemon juice:** This can be easily done by rubbing a slice of lemon over the hyperpigmented area. It gradually reduces the unevenness because lemon is a natural bleach.



**Potato:** Just like the lemon, rub a fresh slice of potato on the target area daily until you see a change on the pigmented area. Potatoes contain an enzyme known as catecholase, which lightens the tone of the skin.

**Milk and curd mask:** These two are known to contain lactic acid which works wonders on uneven skin tone by removing the affected top layer and allowing for skin renewal.

**Aloe vera:** By applying aloe vera gel on the affected area, it allows the renewal of new skin cells after getting rid of the damaged ones.

While treating hyperpigmentation, it is also important to follow a regular skincare regime which should include exfoliating, cleansing, and moisturizing.

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