

# MELASMA

## PATIENT INFORMATION & INSTRUCTIONS

### OVERVIEW

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Melasma is a common skin disorder that presents as a blotchy, brownish facial pigmentation. It is also known as the ‘mask of pregnancy’. Melasma is more common in women than in men, with an onset typically between the ages of 20 and 40 years. Melasma is most common in people who tan easily or have naturally brown skin.

### WHAT CAUSES MELASMA

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The pigmentation ultimately results from the overproduction of melanin by melanocytes (pigment cells). And can be exacerbated by:

- **Family history**
- **Sun exposure**
- **Hormones**
- **Medications**

### MELASMA MINDSET

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The hardest part of treating and dealing with melasma is the acceptance of it being a permanent condition. While some patients may experience hormonal changes that ultimately reverse melasma, for most it is permanent. It will be something that you must learn to manage rather than cure. Knowing that this condition is here to stay can be the first step towards managing it responsibly.

### MELASMA MANAGEMENT: TREATMENT OPTIONS

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#### **Sunscreen:**

Sun exposure is the most common reason for melasma flares. Regardless of other treatments and topicals, year round spf including sun hats & sunglasses is recommend for all melasma patients.

**Hydroquinone Bleaching Creams:** Hydroquinone is the most widely used and effective bleaching cream. It is a prescription topical that can range from 4%-12%. It works by blocking the pathway of melanin production in the skin. Hydroquinone should typically be used in 2-3 month intervals.

- See “**Bleaching Creams**” patient information & instructions for more info.

**Hydroquinone Compound Creams:** Common names such as Triluma or Bleach-Eze. These compounded creams contain hydroquinone along with a retinol and a steroid.

- See “**Bleaching Creams**” patient information & instructions for more info.

**Non-hydroquinone lightening creams:** These typically do not work as well as a hydroquinone “bleaching cream” however they have fewer side effects and are needed even when using hydroquinone for periodic breaks.

- **Lightening ingredients:** Thiamidol, azelaic acid, kojic acid, ascorbic acid, tranexamic acid, glutathione
- See “**Bleaching Creams**” patient information & instructions for more info.

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### (CONTINUED) MELASMA MANAGEMENT: TREATMENT OPTIONS

**Tranexamic acid oral medication:** Tranexamic acid works by blocking the production of melanin, the pigment that gives skin its color. This can help lighten dark patches and prevent new ones from forming. It's important to note that tranexamic acid is typically used in combination with other sun protection measures.

**Chemical Peels:** This is our go to treatment for melasma. Because melasma is a recurring permanent skin condition, it is important to find an affordable treatment for consistent use. Laser treatments below are typically a little better overall, but the price point of chemical peels make them the clear favorite treatment for melasma.

**Pico Laser & other non-ablative pigmentary lasers:** The best treatments at clearing melasma flares, however they do not prevent future flares. It is important that patients understand that only particular lasers help with melasma. Other treatments, such as an IPL, have a 50/50 chance of worsening melasma pigmentation. Specialty lasers such as a pico resolve treatment is the best option.

### RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT TREATMENTS:

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SkinCeuticals Discoloration Defense \$108              | <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Tranexamic Acid                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SkinBetter Even Tone Correcting Serum \$160            | <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical Peel Multiple Treatments           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eucerin Anti-pigment: Day Cream (sold elsewhere)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical Peels as Needed for Flares         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eucerin Anti-pigment Night Cream (sold elsewhere)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Pico Resolve Multiple Treatments            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alastin A-Luminate (sold elsewhere)                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Pico Resolve as Needed for Flares           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Skin Medica Even & Correct (sold elsewhere)            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Daily Sunscreen & Sun protection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydroquinone Bleaching Cream (Use above during breaks) | <input type="checkbox"/> -----                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydroquinone Compound Cream (Use above during breaks)  | <input type="checkbox"/> -----                                       |

### OTHER RESOURCES

We work hard to publish only best patient education and comprehensive resources. We want to be your trusted source of all skin information. You will find additional educational information by scanning the following QR codes.

*Our Patient  
Education Blog*



*Our Monthly  
Newsletter*



*Our Educational  
Youtube Videos*

