

Sun Damage & Hyperpigmentation

1. I'm beginning to notice age spots and sun spots forming. How can I treat them?

Brown spots are an unfortunate part of aging, but the good news is there are products that can help to lighten and brighten skin to reveal a youthful, glowing complexion! Several of my patients also suffer from age spots, sun spots and even post-acne marks and can be caused by a number of factors. Hyper-pigmentation stems from irregular production of melanin – the chief pigment in our skin. Regulating the melanin production cycle is the primary goal of treatment and while many products claim to even tone while diminishing discolorations and blotchiness, many whitening products have harsh side effects.

Vitamin C is one of the quickest ways to restore clarity and fade pigmentation; I recommend Murad®'s White Brilliance® line, which seeks to treat discoloration and blotchiness using Vitamin C, a potent brightening agent and antioxidant. Vitamin C clarifies and brightens skin to promote a more even tone while encouraging collagen production and gentle exfoliator promotes cell turnover to help purge dark damaged cells and restore skin's natural clarity.

In addition to treating your skin topically, I always recommend my patients always treat their skin according to my philosophy of Inclusive Health by looking better with topical treatment, living better through internal diet and health and feeling better through emotional self-care. Your smile will naturally make your skin look bright, healthy and glowing!

2. I want to get bright and smooth skin. What should I do?

Bright, smooth and radiant skin is easy to achieve as long as you take a comprehensive approach to your skincare *and* your healthcare. Whenever I assess any of my patients, I always evaluate them according to my philosophy of Inclusive Health, which says the skin acts as a looking glass into the overall health of the entire body. In order to have beautiful, bright skin, you must take special care in making sure your nutrition and diet, as well as your emotional health are just as important as the care you take in administering your topical treatments.

My philosophy of Inclusive Health allows for my patients to Look Better by using high-performance, topical treatment products that will cleanse, protect and hydrate skin. Vitamin C will rejuvenate skin's clarity to reveal a glowing, healthy complexion. Our Intensive-C Radiance Peel will smooth and illuminate skin, while reducing hyperpigmentation to boost skin clarity. Our Environmental Shield line works in conjunction with potent levels of Vitamin C, promoting healthy cell turnover that seeks to lighten and revitalize skin. Additionally, gentle physical exfoliation a few times a week sloughs away dead skin that builds up and can cause dull, sallow-looking skin. Exfoliation also helps speed cell turnover and diminish the look of an uneven skin tone, resulting in a smoothed texture.

I also recommend a diet full of water-rich foods that will hydrate your skin from the inside out, omegas found in the good fats like cold-water fish, almonds, walnuts and avocados, antioxidants from raw fruits and veggies and amino acids found in embryonic foods like eggs and beans; and Feel Better through the management of stress and a focus on Emotional Self-Care. Practice some form of meditation every morning to prepare yourself for a hectic day, take a brisk stroll around your home or office or book yourself a spa day. Try to put yourself first to assure your health it at its most optimal levels of performance so you can be the best you can be for your loved ones. After all, like I always say you are the most important person in your life. Don't forget to wear your crown!

3. How can I get rid of freckles?

Freckles are simply another form of hyperpigmentation and can be easily lightened with proper treatment. It's important to first understand that the most beautiful skin is always a reflection of overall good health. A diet full of water-rich foods, antioxidants, amino acids and omegas will allow your skin to glow from the inside out with the proper hydration and micro-nutrients to repair damage caused from environmental aggressors like pollution and sun.

To treat freckles topically, look for products with vitamin C, azelaic acid, ellagic acid, bear berry and licorice root which can be used to suppress and gradually lighten epidermal hyperpigmentation. Whenever my patients come to me with concerns surrounding hyperpigmentation, I always tell them to think of an apple that has started to turn brown. The apple is turning brown because it has been exposed and has oxidized. Lemon juice is a common method of brightening the brown discoloration on apples, that's because of the vitamin C in the lemon juice. Our Environmental Shield line is infused with pure Vitamin C and powerful antioxidants to improve skin texture and tone by diminishing the appearance of deep wrinkles and skin discoloration. Also, try our Intensive-C Radiance Peel - it will help to brighten and lighten your skin by exfoliating using glycolic acid and Myrtle Extract to support collagen production to boost cell turnover and resilience. In addition to topical treatments, regular facials and a combination of gentle peels formulated with Vitamin C, salicylic acid, glycolic acid, retinol and niacinamide can contribute to improvement. Lasers and chemical peels will also help depending on the severity of the hyperpigmentation.

Because exposure to the sun stimulates production of pigment in the skin, regular use of a broad-spectrum sunscreen is critical. The quality and effectiveness of sunscreens can vary, so look for ingredients in the formula that will enhance skin health such as anti-inflammatory ingredients, botanical antioxidants. These include vitamins A and C, essential fatty acids and polyphenols all of which may help combat hyperpigmentation. Also, applying high concentrations of Vitamin C prior to sun protection will help lighten your freckles.

4. I've noticed some sun spots around my eyes and on my face but not until the wintertime, why is that?

I sometimes see this in my patients after the warm, sunny months of summer. Oftentimes, sun damage like brown spots and age spots can occur during summer but aren't visible until the wintertime. This is because while we are doing all we can to protect ourselves from the UVA/UVB rays of the sun, sun damage can still occur – even when wearing sunglasses, which can act as a magnifier that causes more damage when the sun hits it at certain angles.

To ensure you are properly protected, I recommend to continue using the Essential-C Eye Cream Broad Spectrum SPF 15 | PA+ and Murad's Daily Renewal Complex. These products will help fade sun spots and age spots naturally with the lightening and brightening effect of Vitamin C while also repairing sun damage. Internally, you can protect your skin from the inside by eating raw fruits and vegetables, the more colorful the better, as they're loaded with skin-protective antioxidants and also have a high water content which helps keep your skin's barrier (the outer layer) hydrated and more resistant to free-radical damage.

