



MELASMA

What is melasma and why does it develop?

Melasma is a light or dark brown discoloration that occurs on the face. It occurs most commonly in women who are pregnant or taking oral contraceptive pills and who live in sunny areas. However, it may occur in the absence of these factors, and it is sometimes seen in men. The exact cause is unknown but hereditary, hormones, and sunlight exposure are certainly important factors. Cosmetics probably do not play a role.

How is it treated?

Melasma of pregnancy usually disappears over a period of months following delivery. Melasma associated with oral contraceptive pills may last several years after stopping the pills.

- Bleaching creams containing hydroquinone applied twice daily to the affected areas may be used. Improvement is usually not noticed until the treatment has been used for several months.
- For any treatment to be effective, it is essential that you use a sunblock every day (even on cloudy days). Use a sunblock that blocks UVA and UVB, for example Neutrogena's Sensitive Skin UVA/UVB Block SPF 30.