

Melasma

1. What is Melasma?

Melasma is a common skin condition in Asians that results in brown to dark, discoloured patches appearing on the skin, especially on the face i.e. the nose, cheeks

This condition is common among women aged 35-40, though men can also experience it.

Melasma is divided into 3 types depending on the location of Melanin; which is the pigment responsible for the discolouration.

- I. Epidermal
- II. Dermal
- III. Mixed

Epidermal melisma can be treated easily as the melanin deposition is more superficial. However, the dermal & mixed types are harder to treat.

2. How do you get the disease?

The cause of Melasma is excessive production of Melanin by pigment producing cells in the skin.

Melanin gives a black/ brown discoloration to the skin.

Although the exact causes are not yet identified, the exacerbating factors which have been identified are:

Genetic influence: Melasma tends to run in families. If your relatives have had it, you may be at a higher risk.

Sunlight Exposure: Excessive exposure to UV rays triggers the production of melanin, leading to darkened skin patches.

Hormonal Changes: Hormonal fluctuations during pregnancy, the use of contraceptive pills, and hormone replacement therapy can contribute to melasma. However, melisma tends to clear after pregnancy.

3. What are the treatment options?

- **Topical medications:** A qualified Doctor will prescribe the correct application depending on the skin type, extent & type of Melasma. Proper application in correct way & correct time will give good results.



- Chemical Peels: Performed by a dermatologist, with pharmaceutical chemicals. It will not only remove Melasma, which was refractory to topical treatment, but will also give immediate results.
- Laser Therapy: Advanced laser treatments can effectively treat stubborn patches of melasma.
- Oral medications

4. How do you prevent Melasma?

- ❖ Avoid sun exposure
 - Avoid exposure to sun from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 - Using wide brimmed hats, black umbrellas and long sleeved tops
 - Using sun screens with SPF not less than 30.
 - Standardized sunscreen should be applied 20-30 minutes before sun exposure as a thick film and should be reapplied every 2 hours if exposing to the sun for a longer time.
- ❖ Skin should also be protected from fluorescent light.
- ❖ Do not apply various under standard cosmetics on the face and do not expose to the sun afterwards.

Even after proper treatment & clearance of Melasma, still it can reappear if you do not adhere to above prevention tips and if the genetic influence is big.

