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what causes uneven skin tone?



An uneven skin tone, called hyperpigmentation, is irregular darkening of the skin. The cause: overproduction of melanin, the pigment responsible for skin and hair color. The resulting dark patches and spots are typically perceived as "aged skin" and can make you look more than 12 years older.

How is uneven skin tone caused?

Sun exposure: When your skin is repeatedly exposed to UV light, sun damage occurs. Brown spots and uneven skin tone develop as a result of too much melanin being produced to help protect your skin from UV light.

Pollution: Particles and gasses from traffic-related air pollution are able to penetrate the skin and lead to formation of brown spots, particularly on the face.

Hormones: Melasma is hormone-related hyperpigmentation caused by increased hormone stimulation. It's most commonly experienced by women who are pregnant (which is why it's also known as the "mask of pregnancy") or taking contraceptives, but can also be a reaction to cosmetics or medications.

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Post-Inflammatory Hyperpigmentation: This is a darkening of the skin as a result of scarring, which can be caused by acne lesions or skin injury.

How to get an even skin tone.

You don't have to spend a fortune on laser treatments and prescriptions. Here are ways to safely and non-invasively brighten skin for a more even skin tone:

Apply SPF daily. Unprotected sun exposure is the number one culprit behind hyperpigmentation. Applying a sunscreen or moisturizer with a Broad-Spectrum SPF of at least 30 is the easiest way to help prevent new spots. Tip: Look for Oleosome technology, which increases SPF performance.

Exfoliate. Treat existing hyperpigmentation by first sloughing off dead, dulling skin cells at the surface. This clears the path for the ingredients in your serums and moisturizers to better penetrate the skin. Tip: Look for a gentle, micro-fine exfoliant you can use daily.

Use the right ingredients. Seek out products that contain Activated Charcoal to help remove pollutants; Oligopeptides, Niacinamide and Zinc Glycinate to help control melanin production; and Retinol to restore skin.

Be patient. There's no quick fix for an uneven skin tone. Traditionally it takes at least 30 days of vigilant skin care treatment before you see any progress. Successful, 75 percent skin brightening can take up to four months, so don't give up!

Kickstart your battle against brown spots by asking a Dermalogica skin therapist for a free Face Mapping® skin analysis. She will hone in on what's causing your spots and recommend a plan of action. Tying in a professional series of treatments, such as peels, may even help expedite results.