

how to deal with hyperpigmentation and dark spots

Have you ever looked in the mirror and noticed a few dark spots where your pimples used to be or just got back from a 10-day vacation in the sun only to find darker patches appearing on your face? Address hyperpigmentation or post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH) with your skin care routine.



story highlights

A quick summary of hyperpigmentation:

- A direct result of the overproduction of melanin.
 - Occurs in patches or large areas.
 - Can be caused by exposure to the aging, sun, certain medications, pregnancy (melasma), or other hormonal changes.
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defining hyperpigmentation

In medical terminology, “hyper” in medical terms means more or excessive, while “pigment” is the color of our skin. Hyperpigmentation translates to “more pigment” and that pigment is melanin. Melanin is produced by our cells and is responsible for giving us our skin tone. When those cells overproduce melanin in certain areas, the skin will appear darker than our natural tone. If you’re noticing uneven skin tone, don’t fret — it’s a fairly common sign of skin aging.

defining post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH)

Post-Inflammatory means just what it sounds like: “after inflammation.” In these circumstances, however, it just means “after a breakout.” PIH is a type of hyperpigmentation you experience after a pimple has run its course. Those dark spots leftover from last week’s breakout are actually called post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation.

PIH is temporary and only occurs after the skin cells have been damaged or irritated in some way, like when you pick at pimples. Hyperpigmentation is not brought on by any sort of damage to the skin and, in some cases, it doesn’t fade on its own.

treating hyperpigmentation vs. PIH

Hyperpigmentation and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation have a few main differences. For instance, PIH is easier to treat with over-the-counter acne products.

more on post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation

Post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation appears on the skin as small dark spots that are usually brown, pink, or red in color — unlike hyperpigmentation, which will appear in larger patches. PIH usually fades relatively quickly and only appears post-breakout. Some ingredients to help fade PIH fast are Salicylic Acid, Niacinamide, Vitamin C, and AHA & BHA. Some of our favorite products to help fade dark spots are **Age Bright Clearing Serum** and **BioLumin-C Serum**. They contain all the previously mentioned ingredients, are gentle enough for everyday use, and will leave your complexion looking both glowing and dewy.

To summarize:

- Caused by inflammation or trauma to the skin (post breakout).
- Appears as small dots which are usually brown, pink, or red.
- Not permanent and fades quicker with the help of topical treatments such as Salicylic Acid, Vitamin C, Niacinamide, and Glycolic Acid.

how can i even skin tone?

When it comes to treating hyperpigmentation, a common ingredient is Vitamin A, also known as Retinol. Most major skin care companies will have Retinol in their line, however, depending on the severity of the pigmentation, you may need something prescription strength. **Dynamic Skin Retinol Serum** is a high-dose, fast-acting multi-retinoid with booster technology that helps to even skin tone — and an even skin tone is a sign of healthy-looking skin.

ingredients to help lighten hyperpigmentation and PIH

kojic acid

Relatively new to the skin care world, Kojic Acid is a chemical derived from fungi and can also be created during a brewing process of fermented rice. With its ability to penetrate deep into the skin to prevent melanin production, it’s considered a natural brightening agent — and it’s more tolerable for those with sensitive skin.

niacinamide

A form of B3 or niacin, Niacinamide can help lighten pigment and help uneven skin tone while also helping with breakouts, and can even be used on skin types with rosacea.

retinoids

A Vitamin A derivative, retinoids are highly effective in helping with not only pigmentation but also acne and fine lines and wrinkles. Its ability to speed up the cellular turnover rate makes this ingredient an all-around great product for skin aging. **Dynamic Skin Retinol Serum** helps to reverse the appearance of wrinkles, retexturize skin and minimize the appearance of pores, and even skin tone. It’s important to note that while you may want to use Retinol every day, it’s always best to begin incorporating it into your skin care routine 2-3 times per week to allow your skin to acclimate and experience the maximum Retinol benefits for your skin.

azelaic acid

A Dicarboxylic acid produced from yeast such as barley and wheat. This acid helps to quickly restore skin to its healthy state and can help treat acne as well as lighten darker skin.

hydroquinone

A powerful skin bleaching agent, hydroquinone can lighten anything from age spots to post-acne scars to freckles. Due to its strength, hydroquinone is usually prescribed by a doctor and is not meant for long term use, rather than used initially to lighten stubborn pigmentation until desired results are achieved.

in conclusion

Treating hyperpigmentation and PIH presents its challenges. But on the bright side, both are treatable and preventable with the proper skin care regimen and a little patience. Remember that preventing is always easier than treating, so invest in a good regimen now to ensure you always have healthy and glowing skin. Getting regular chemical peels from your skin therapist can also be extremely beneficial for both PIH and hyperpigmentation. This speeds up cellular turnover rate, resulting in new cells and a brighter complexion. Sunscreen is your BFF and hats are essential when spending long days under harsh UVA and UVB rays.

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