

Let's talk about Pigmentation
Dr. Shubhangini Sharma

If you're someone who has those brown spots on your cheeks, fear not you're not the only one! This condition is known as Melasma and the common causes include your hormones, genes, UV light exposure and certain medications.

Now, when we say hormones, in females it most commonly erupts after pregnancy. If the condition runs in your family, then the chances of you getting it are higher. UV exposure does not restrict the cause only to sunlight, it also includes the UV light emitted from the gas stove we use most commonly in our houses, and blue light emitted from your laptop screens and phones. The most common areas where melasma is seen are cheeks, nose, forehead and chin.

Treatment:

The importance of the use of sunscreen cannot be stressed enough. Depending on your skin type, your dermatologist will suggest sunscreen which is a must to apply even when you are not stepping out. Physical protection from the sun in the form of sunglasses, wide-brim hats, and covering your face with a scarf is also advisable.

Depending on the depth of your pigmentation, your doctor will suggest you certain depigmenting creams (kojic acid, vitamin C, hydroquinone, silymarin, etc). Certain depigmenting agents are not supposed to be used long term and hence consulting your dermatologist before using them is a must! In cases of stubborn pigmentation, you might be advised to go for certain procedures like Chemical peels, Electroporation, Microdermabrasion, IPL, Q switch Nd: YAG laser, along with the medical line of treatment.

An important point to be noted here is that even after treatment, maintenance is a must with sunscreen and some creams or serums at night which can help in preventing the pigmentation from coming back.

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