

## Eliminating Brown Spots

### Even Out Your Skin Tone with Good Care

Many people develop brown spots on their skin over time, especially if they've had a trauma to their skin or spent much time in the sun. The term for these spots is hyperpigmentation, which describes an excess of pigment in the skin. Often an early sign of aging, they may first appear on the backs of hands. These spots can be faded, but patience for the process is required because repeated treatments will be necessary. It takes regular use of sunscreen to keep hyperpigmentation from returning. (Note that hyperpigmentation is different from hypopigmentation, which appears as lighter spots on the skin).

Hyperpigmentation arises when melanin in the epidermis becomes irritated, so to

#### FRECKLES/LENTIGENES.

These are the result of an inherited tendency; exposure to the sun will darken their color.

#### SOLAR LENTIGENES.

These darkened spots on the skin that some call age spots indicate overexposure to the sun that has resulted in ultraviolet light damage.

#### MELASMA.

Melasma is a response to hormone changes, such as those caused by birth control pills, pregnancy, and menopause, resulting in facial spots.

#### POSTINFLAMMATORY HYPERPIGMENTATION.

This is the direct result of an injury to

*"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."*

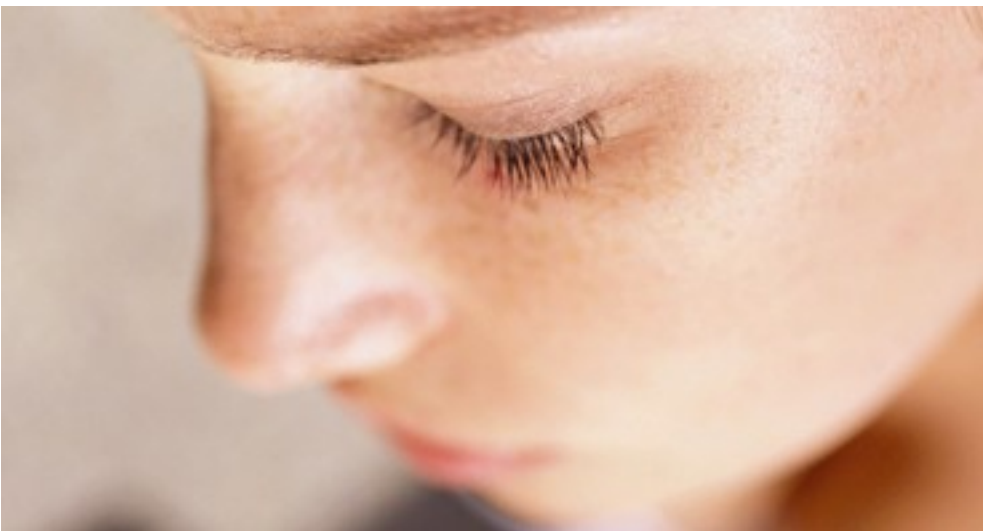
- W. A. Ward

#### Office Hours and Contact

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Also known as hyperpigmentation, brown spots can be an early sign of aging or skin trauma.

speaking, and increases production, darkening the outer skin and becoming visible at the skin's surface. Regularly scheduled professional treatments, combined with a proper home care regimen, can calm the production of melanin and lighten the skin.

Hyperpigmentation takes different forms. These include:

the skin. The body's response to injury is inflammation. Some think this inflammation reprograms melanocytes to be hyperactive and to produce more melanin. It affects men and women equally. Some common pigmentation-causing injuries include: abrasions, cuts, and wounds; acne lesions and cysts,

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excoriations (picking pimples); aggressive chemical exfoliation (peels); aggressive extraction; ingrown hairs; insect bites; scratching; sunburn; and waxing.

There is another type of hyperpigmentation that is more diffused and appears as an overall darkening of the skin, rather than in patches and spots. This condition should be cared for by a dermatologist, as it may reflect a disease or systemic problem, like Addison's disease or scleroderma.)

## Causes

Hyperpigmentation can be caused by certain prescription drugs, like antibiotics, antidepressants, barbiturates (depressants), and chemotherapy drugs. Some over-the-counter laxatives with phenolphthalein and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), like ibuprofen, can cause hyperpigmentation. Be sure to record your use of these drugs on the intake form (or on an updated health history) when you arrive and verbally mention them to your esthetician before beginning a treatment.

Occasionally, people mistake darkness under the eyes for hyperpigmentation, but this condition is a reflection of the blood vessels through the surface of the skin. These circles have a variety of causes and can sometimes be treated with peptides.

While hyperpigmentation generally affects all races, some forms of it appear more often with certain skin colors and tones. For example, melasma and postinflammatory hyperpigmentation are more prevalent in darker skin. Solar lentigenes are more prevalent in lighter skin (ninety percent of white adults older than 60 have age spots); they also are more common in women than men.

## Prevention

It's very important that you follow the instructions of your skin care professional in preparing for any skin treatments. Your skin care professional will take steps to avoid inducing pigmentation when he or she performs chemical exfoliation, extractions, or waxing. For example, you may be advised to undergo preliminary treatments or to use skin care products, or both, for

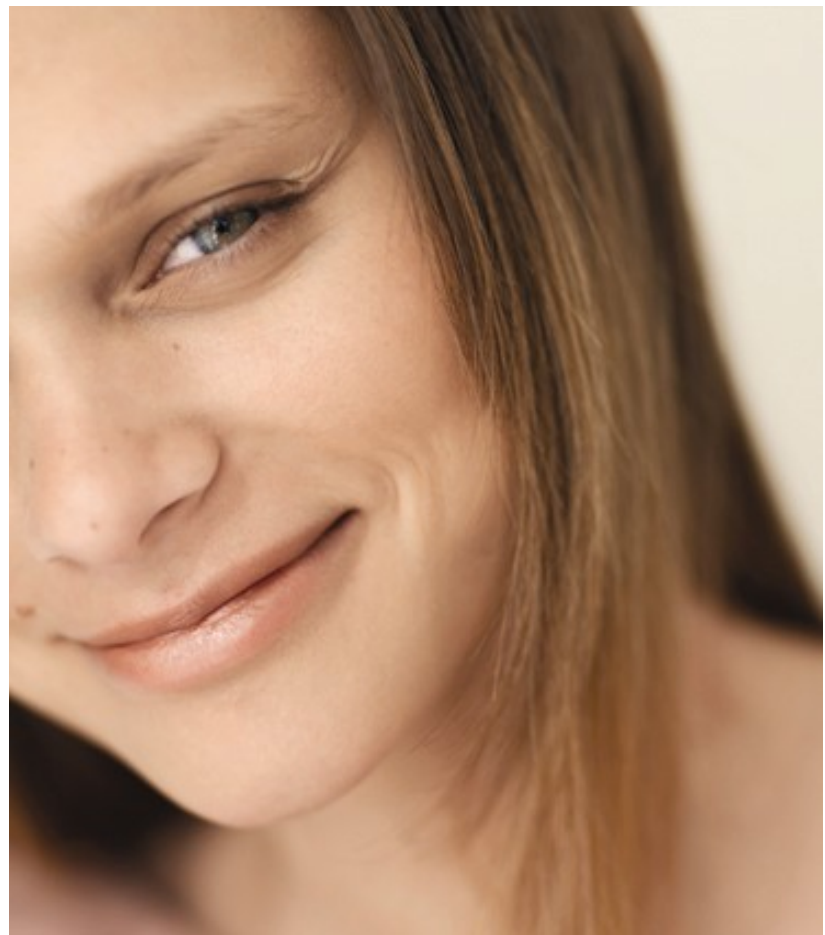
several weeks before chemical exfoliation (peels) or microdermabrasion. This preparation will reduce the odds of postinflammatory hyperpigmentation and give you better treatment results when you do receive peels or microdermabrasion.

To prevent sun-induced hyperpigmentation and other skin damage, sunscreen is the most important product to use. Diligent use of sunscreen can prevent further sun damage, but it cannot repair damage already done. Experts strongly recommend using generous amounts of SPF 15 (or higher) sunscreen at all times, reapplying it every few hours. Sunscreens with avobenzene, titanium dioxide, or zinc oxide provide the most complete coverage. Even more importantly, sunscreen reduces ultraviolet light exposure, which reduces the risk of skin cancer.

## Treatment

As a member of Associated Skin Care Professionals (ASCP), your esthetician is prepared to help address questions you have about your skin and to work with you to determine the most useful

care that meets your needs. The treatment of brown spots can be highly effective, but it takes a bit of time. Professional treatments for hyperpigmentation may include chemical exfoliation or microdermabrasion in combination with topical products. Or, topical treatments may be used alone. Your esthetician can best determine what will bring you the greatest results. Again, following the directions for home care after professional treatments is very important to your success. Make the most of the time and money you've invested in your treatments by following up on your esthetician's instructions.



Your esthetician can provide options for evening out skin tone and eliminating brown spots.

# Enzyme Power

Lisa VanBöckern

As we age, natural exfoliation can take up to 40 days or more, which leads to a buildup of dead skin cells. This means fine lines, uneven skin tone, and in some cases, acne. Incorporating natural fruit enzymes into your skin care regimen is a great way to clean, correct, and polish the skin, as well as deliver nutrition to skin cells.

## Good-Bye Dead Skin

In the late 1800s, papain (found in unripe papaya) was first explored and recognized as an enzyme useful in digesting protein. This makes papaya useful for light exfoliation, as it operates in a way that's similar to digestive enzymes breaking down food in the stomach; it digests dead skin to reveal fresh, healthy cells.

## Fruit Antioxidants

Fruit enzymes also offer antioxidant benefits to the skin. To visualize oxidation, think of an apple that's been cut and left out in the open. It turns brown. Yet, if you squeeze a lemon over the apple right after slicing it, it stays

fresh and looks more appetizing. While we wouldn't want lemon juice (at 100 percent L-ascorbic acid) on our skin, we do want the benefits of a more gentle, buffered substance to stabilize pH and control acidity. Products including fruits like blueberry, kiwi, lemon, pomegranate, and pumpkin provide great antioxidant nutrition to the skin.

## Stay Hydrated

Natural enzymes in the epidermis require water, since water regulates almost every enzymatic action. This raises interesting questions: Do you drink enough water? Do you live in a dry climate or other environment where trans-epidermal water loss is great? If there is not enough water among skin cells, natural enzymes will not kick in. Adding water to your diet will further enhance enzymatic activity.

*Lisa VanBöckern is founder and owner of Skin Script Skin Care of Tempe, Arizona. She is a formulator of corrective fruit enzyme products and educates on that topic. Her esthetic focus has been on corrective skin treatments for all ethnicities.*



Finding products with natural fruit enzymes can boost

# The Scoop on Sugar

## Not Such a Sweet Story

Shelley Burns, N.D.

Most people have no idea just how much sugar is in the foods Americans consume. However, this sweet culprit may be behind many health issues, including skin problems. Here's why.

When refined carbohydrates, otherwise known as simple sugars, are consumed in excess, they cause an increase in blood sugar levels. This excess sugar (glucose) attaches itself to proteins and is referred to as glycosylation. All cells in our bodies have a protein component to them including our hormones, enzymes, cholesterol, and immune cells. As proteins become coated with glucose, they are unable to work effectively.

Collagen, that vital component of a glowing complexion, makes up 40 percent of the proteins in the body. Glycosylation hastens protein cross-linking, which weakens collagen. The result: wrinkles.

But wait, there's more. Sugar also causes an increase in levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, which can interfere with

hormonal balance and increase inflammation. Skin inflammation can manifest as acne, puffiness under the eyes, and eczema. Sugar also increases insulin levels and reduces sensitivity of insulin. In fact, research shows people with acne process sugar poorly, which could be a direct result of high cortisol and high insulin levels in the blood.

And finally, sugar depletes the necessary nutrients required to keep the immune system healthy. For example, sugar interferes with the way the body uses vitamin C, which is needed for the formation of collagen and elastin as well as immunity. It can also lead to sluggish digestion, which also affects the skin.

The best way to steer clear of sugar is to read labels. Avoid products that list sugar in the first three ingredients, and be aware of words ending in "ose" such as sucrose, dextrose, and maltose, all of which are sugar indicators. Also avoid processed foods and refined carbohydrates, such as white flour, white rice, and white potatoes.

Whenever the sweet allure of sugar tempts you, remember, sugar-free is key to beauty.

*"Acknowledging  
the good that  
you already have  
in your life is the  
foundation for  
all abundance."*

-Eckhart Tolle

Hey there Leading Lady! I hope you have enjoyed this month's issue of the Leading Lady Newsletter. I have am grateful that you've invested a couple of minutes in yourself to read through the articles. Have a productive and fulfilling month!

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MEMBER

