

SPOTLIGHT

BY: VALERIE KELLEY

If you had to guess which signs of aging bother most women, chances are you'd pick wrinkles. And you would be correct. But there's another aging giveaway which bothers women just as much: dark spots.

These small dark patches — known technically as hyperpigmentation — are caused by over-production of melanin, the brown pigment within the skin, brought about by long-term exposure to ultraviolet light. The result, of course, is that a full-blown beauty industry has sprung up around them. A myriad of products now exist that are expressly designed to reverse the damage, remove, and prevent dark spots. So, where does one begin?

According to Dana Martinez, owner of South Tampa's Lecada Medical Artistry, hyperpigmentation can be a challenging condition. The good news is there are potent treatments available to remedy the situation.

In-office chemical peels are the quickest and most effective course of action. Martinez favors ViPeel's quarterly system of peels which result in a quick, non-aggressive shedding of the surface layers of the skin. "It's a great alternative to laser that works well on all complexions, especially dark or olive skin tones," she says. "The exfoliation helps lift away accumulated dead cells which hold excess melanin."

If peeling isn't your thing, all skin types can try Fraxel Laser to specifically target pigmentation and sun damage, helping break up stubborn spots by creating microscopic wounds at the dermal layer. Typically, skin will have a pinkish tone for 3-5 days, then turn darker for 7-10 days. Flaking may occur as new skin replaces dead tissue. A series of 3-5 treatments, spaced a month apart is generally recommended for an amazing result.

More recently, Martinez and her team have seen incredible results with Collagen Induction Therapy. C.I.T., or micro-needling, works to initiate an all-natural



repair process within the skin's deepest layers, and is the only skin rejuvenation treatment to target and regulate 3 key skin cells (keratinocyte, melanocyte and fibroblast) without compromising the integrity of the epidermis. Your skin starts improving from the very first treatment and the results continue in the deep layers of the skin for over a year after your treatment.

Last, but not least, the much-maligned hydroquinone, one of the oldest treatments for skin lightening and the ingredient reportedly responsible for Michael Jackson's "bleached" look, is actually okay in small amounts. Hydroquinone is available in 2% formulations over-the-counter or 4% by prescription and is extremely effective at blocking the pathway for melanin. New to the market is a prescription-only melasma cream by Trinity Medical Pharmacy that combines Hydroquinone and Tretinoin with a groundbreaking technology that delivers faster, more visible results. Since the

cream is compounded at the time of order, it has no preservatives and is paraben-free; as a prescription, it's covered by many insurances.

Although, treatment is an essential part of reducing and correcting the visual appearance of hyperpigmentation, the importance of sunscreen cannot be overstated. Exposure to sunlight automatically stimulates the formation of new melanin. Wear a broad-spectrum SPF 30 sunscreen, one with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, every day--yes, even on cloudy days! With a regimen that works and adequate sun protection you can prevent your discoloration from ever returning.

Contact Lecada Medical Artistry for a complimentary consultation on safe, effective methods to remove hyperpigmentation and prevent its return. Their expert staff is waiting for your call at 813.874.2332. Lecada is conveniently located in South Tampa at 3710 West Azelee Street, Tampa 33609.