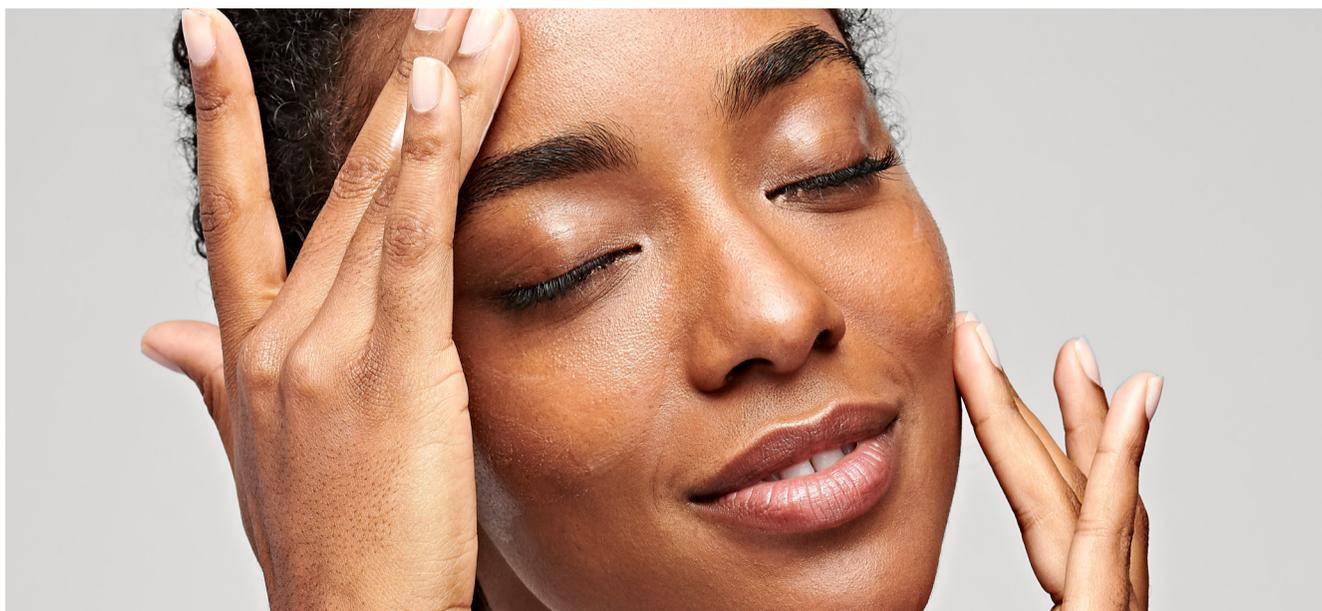


what causes uneven skin tone?



story highlights

- Dark spots are typically caused by UV exposure, pollution, hormone changes, or inflammation
 - Daily SPF use, exfoliation, and active ingredients can all help fade dark spots and restore your natural skin
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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 20 years older.

What causes dark spots and uneven skin tone?

Sun exposure: When your skin is repeatedly exposed to UV light, sun damage occurs. The formation of excess melanin in the skin is your skin’s natural defense system against this damage that can occur from this exposure. Dark spots and uneven skin tone develop as a result of too much melanin being produced during this protection process.

Pollution: Particles and gasses from traffic-related air pollution are able to penetrate the skin and become lodged in the skin’s deeper structure. This oxidizes the surrounding tissue and leads to free radical damage, triggering an inflammatory response that results in the formation of dark spots, particularly on the face.

Hormones: Melasma is hormone-related hyperpigmentation caused by hormonal imbalance. 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.

Inflammation: Any trauma to the skin, whether it’s a wound, breakout, or even the result of a medical procedure such as resurfacing or laser hair removal, can cause melanocytes to be damaged or overstimulated. This results in post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH), 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 fade dark spots 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 dark spots. Tip: Look for an SPF that also includes ingredients to help fade dark spots, such as Niacinamide.

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, Hexylresorcinol, Niacinamide and Zinc Glycinate to help control melanin production; and Retinol to restore skin.

Be patient. There’s no quick fix for dark spots and uneven skin tone. Traditionally it takes at least 30 days of vigilant skin care treatment before you see any progress. The fading of dark spots can take time, so don’t give up!

Kickstart your new routine to fade dark spots by asking a Dermalogica skin therapist for a free Face Mapping skin analysis. They 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.