Brown Spot Removal
Age/Liver Spots

If you are like 95% of the population, you will at some time during your life develop age spots. These unwanted brown pigment spots, often called liver spots or age spots, are the result of chronic sun exposure, preceding skin redness or inflammation, and/or hormonal influences. Brown spots usually occur on the face, neck, chest, hands and other sun exposed areas. Most of these skin discolorations are simply a cosmetic problem and are treatable. On occasion, if these spots change color or thicken, they may need to be evaluated by your provider.

What are my treatment options?

1. Home treatments:
Home Treatments can be designed for your skin type and complexion, and usually combine the use of a lightening cream (Obagi Clear) and a broad spectrum sunscreen. Often a Vitamin-A cream such as, Retin-A is also recommended. Follow-up office visits are advised at 3-6 month intervals to monitor your progress and make necessary adjustments in your treatment program.

2. Office treatments:
A series of light acid peel(s) can be applied successfully in our aesthetics department under the supervision of Dr. Goldberg, to augment and quicken the results of your home treatment. The strength and type of acid applied depends on your skin type and the depth of skin discoloration. A mild, superficial peel with glycolic acid, Jessner's solution, or a salicylic acid is usually recommended to jumpstart and complement your home program. These procedures are usually performed in a series of 3-6 peels at 2-4 week intervals. A light acid peel usually causes some mild redness but virtually no disruption in your activities. These light peels will result in a more uniform skin tone and color.

On occasion, a stronger acid peeling agent (TCA) will be applied to more stubborn lesions. TCA is an acid that is utilized at various strengths. A crust or scab usually is present for a number of days following this treatment.

3. Liquid nitrogen:
Liquid nitrogen therapy is also an effective treatment for smaller, and fewer brown spots. Treatments are performed safely and comfortably often in one treatment session in Dr. Goldberg's office. A crust or scab will usually develop at the treated site for a few days and will go away within a week or less. There is some risk of skin lightening at the site following treatment.

4. Laser Treatments:
There are several selective new Lasers available to remove certain skin discolorations. These Lasers work by selectively being absorbed by the abnormal brown pigment, often sparing other non-affected skin structures. The current Laser options in our office include the Versapulse Lasers and the Vbeam Laser. These devices precisely target the brown pigment and leave an immediate, small brown or gray surface change, which subsequently scabs and falls off over a period of several days to a week. These Lasers are the most effective devices, usually yielding excellent results in 1-2 sessions.

5. Intense Pulsed Light Treatment:
Pima Dermatology currently has the Starlux Intense Pulsed Light system for improvement of brown and red spots. These treatments utilize a cooling gel which contacts and cools the skin and makes the treatments quite comfortable. There is often some brown scaling or scabbing that occurs for several days to a week following these treatments. These procedures are performed by many of our aesthetic staff under the supervision of Dr. Goldberg. Typically the treatments are less costly and more gentle than the Lasers, but may require up to 2-5 treatments to get the best results.
Frequently Asked Questions:

**Do the Laser or Light treatments hurt?**
Most Laser or Light procedures for brown spots are performed without anesthesia. You may feel a slight stinging or burning sensation, similar to a rubber band snapping, or hot oil off a pan during the procedure. However, the treatments are usually well-tolerated. You may request a topical anesthetic agent which is be applied well in advance of the treatment for your optimal comfort.

**How long does it take to heal?**
Depending on the Laser used, scabbing may last between 5-14 days. After the scab separates, the skin can be pink for a few weeks. This pink color will slowly fade and normalize over the subsequent 2-6 weeks.

**What are the risks of these procedures?**
With any of these procedures, a crust can develop, an infection can occur and potentially a scar could form. This is very rare, and as long as you follow up with us if any question arises, the risk of scarring is rare. There can be a prolonged whitish area of the skin after some treatments. This complication is exceedingly rare with one of the Laser or Light sources but more common following an over-exuberant response to Liquid Nitrogen therapy. We tend to use the Laser or Light devices in any area where there is a significant cosmetic concern.

**After my treatment how do I prevent these brown spots from returning?**
Preventive maintenance is key. The use of a broad spectrum Zinc Oxide or Titanium Dioxide sunscreen is vitally important. In addition, several light freshening chemical peels can help blend treatment areas and add a more uniform and glowing skin surface following or in addition to your in-office treatments. As noted above an ongoing home care program with a Vitamin-A, glycolic and Vitamin-B or Vitamin-C products is often recommended in addition to regular sunblock usage for long-term skin health and maintenance.

**How do I know if Laser surgery is for me?**
Dr. Goldberg, or one of our highly trained staff members will consult with you about your condition before making any decisions about which treatment to recommend. We will consider your skin type, the results you desire, and your specific skin care needs to tailor an approach that is best for you.

All treatments are done in the comfort of our in-office Laser center. Pima Dermatology has one of the most experienced and comprehensive Laser centers in the Southwestern United States.

If you have questions or want to schedule a consultation or a Laser appointment please call Monica, Carla, Lynne at 795-7729.

Please visit us at www.pimaderm.com for before and after photos and more information on other services we provide.