

Beauty AUTHORITY...

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Dr Komathy from The Lifestyle Clinic tells us how we can lighten and prevent pigmentation on our face and body.

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What are the different types of pigmentation and what can we do to get rid of them?

The common types seen in the clinic are freckles, solar lentigines, Hori's nevus, melasma, post inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH) and dark eye circles.

- **Freckles** are commonly found on fair skinned women and been present from the time they were in their teens. They can be easily removed by IPL.
- **Solar lentigines** are sunspots due to damage to the skin from chronic exposure to the sun. These can be removed by Q-switch Nd-Yag laser.
- **Hori's nevus** looks like sun spots but are darker and occur mainly on the outer corner of cheek bones. These require many sessions of the Q-switch Nd-Yag laser.
- **Melasma** is seen commonly in women aged 40 and above and appears as a blackish-brownish patch mainly over the cheeks, forehead and upper lip. This is a difficult condition to treat and my best solution is the Obagi blue peel.
- **Post inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH)** occurs after inflammation as in the case of eczema or acne. They can also occur after more serious conditions such as burns including those from waxing, chemical peels or IPL. The other common cause is friction from shaving which results in dark patches on legs, arm pits and around the groin. PIH is difficult to treat and needs a combination of lightening creams together with chemical peels or Q-switch laser. The sooner the treatment is started, the quicker the results.
- **Dark eye circles** are mostly seen on Indians and is hugely due to hyperpigmentation. This is a tough one to treat but we have had success with a combination of effective lightening agents and chemical peels.


ABOUT THE DOCTOR:

A veteran in the aesthetic industry, **Dr Komathy** has been doing glycolic peels back when she was a GP in Australia in the early 90s. At The Lifestyle Clinic, she offers personalised services and a wide range of hi-tech aesthetic treatments like chemical peels, microdermabrasions, laser hair removal, hair loss remedies, Botox, face lifts, facial and body slimming.

My underarms, elbows, groin and knee pits are dark, what can I do to lighten them?

We have had many requests to lighten parts of the body other than the face, such as arm pits, neck, knees, hands and feet. With the popularity of Brazilian waxing on the pubic area, we have also had an increase in patients who wish to lighten the groin area. Treatment involves a combination of lightening cream containing hydroquinone and retinol with a series of chemical peels. The lightening cream prevents hyperpigmentation while the chemical peels gradually remove the existing pigmented skin. Hydroquinone and retinol are restricted medication and can only be obtained from a doctor. Creams obtained over the counter do not have ingredients or the strength to be effective enough to lighten.

Besides sunblock, what else can we do to prevent pigmentation?

Sunblock has to be used daily even if one stays at home. Besides topical sunblock, I recommend oral sunblock such as Heliocare especially if you are travelling to places where there will be direct sun exposure such as beach resort holidays. I also recommend a hat with a wide brim that shades the face from the sun's glare. 



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