

The Doctor is In

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Call Them Anything But “Age Spots!”

The truth behind those dark spots...

I had a big birthday last month, one of those birthdays with a zero. It seemed as though every patient that has come into my office the past few weeks has asked about “old age spots.” I try to explain that I don’t believe in old age. In fact, I have decided that I am going to do all that I can to eliminate these spots from the “face” of the earth or at least from Tarrant County. To achieve that, I consulted some of my dermatologist friends to begin a protest, and maybe open an encampment on Wall Street in Grapevine—anything to raise the public’s awareness that we don’t have to endure the injustice of these disfiguring brown spots any longer!

Dark Spots Revealed

Dark spots sun spots, and age spots are all common terms for what dermatologists know as solar lentigos. These types of pigment problems are chronic acquired skin conditions and appear as freckles or larger irregular brown patches on the forehead, cheeks, lips, neck and nose.

Causes and How to Avoid Dark Spots

The cause of these dark spots is not fully known, but is due primarily to the sun’s dam-

aging rays. Exposure to UV light, heat, hormonal changes and genetic factors are thought to play interconnected roles in the development of these troublesome spots. In this part of the country, where many people have extensive photodamage, lentigos are much more common in all skin types at an early age. *(At my age, 40 sounds pretty young.)*

Put Your Best Face Forward

The effect of years of accumulated pigmented spots over a face can make us appear much older than we really are and even older than we feel. For ladies, these spots can become difficult to conceal under make-up. For men, it signals the transition to a tired unhealthy appearance. In a tough job market, sales position or in a new relationship the spots can send the wrong signal when we need to be putting our best foot, or face, forward.

Treatment Is Available

Fortunately, treatment is available—ask your dermatologist what is right for you. Some of the options that might be offered to you include various peels and intense pulse light treatments. Peels can be of various strengths, but in general, the stronger the peel, the big-

ger the effect—and the longer the down time that you may need to recover.

Minimal Side Effects with IPL

For this reason, many patients prefer lighter peels and more frequent treatments. Usually, lentigos are effectively treated with two to three peels that do not cause you to miss that big event or even a day of work.

Intense pulse light peels (IPL) treatments should be administered in a professional setting where trained personnel can optimize and control the setting for maximum benefits and minimal side effects.

An Ideal Time for Treatment

Treatment during the winter months is ideal because there is less sun to cause repigmentation or relapse of the spots. *Note:* Don’t forget to wear sunscreen in every season to prevent these dark spots from occurring and new spots from forming. Ex-sun worshippers—FIGHT!

About Dr. Plott

Todd Plott, MD is a board certified dermatologist and native Texan. He served as the medical director and dermatology expert for a national line of sunscreen products. With 20 years of dermatology research experience Dr. Plott is on the frontier of developments in dermatology therapy. He’s been established as a consultant for multiple pharmaceutical companies to help bring new products to the marketplace and has been recognized for his contributions to new drug development. His new practice, Dermatology Alliance-Keller is currently accepting new patients.