

What to Do about Liver Spots



Years spent soaking up the sun can result in circular patches of light brown pigmentation, called liver spots or age spots, on your face, arms, neck, and the back of your hands. Liver spots have nothing to do with the liver, though; they're "superfreckles"—areas of dark pigment triggered by overexposure to the sun.

Here's what you can do to minimize liver spots.

- Apply a concealer (cover-up cream) that matches your skin tone.
- Always apply a sunscreen lotion with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher 30 to 45 minutes before you go outdoors.
- Apply an over-the-counter bleaching cream to the discolored areas. (These products can take months to work and lighten spots only slightly.)

If these tactics don't help, consult a dermatologist. He or she may recommend one of the following medical treatments for liver spots.

- A prescription bleaching cream.
- A prescription peeling cream, like Retin-A.
- Chemical peels (a mild acid is applied with a cotton swab to each patch of pigment).
- Dermabrasion (the skin is numbed, then rubbed with a high-speed electrical device).

These treatments all produce some discomfort and sometimes leave a permanent white spot where the skin has been treated, however.