

NEW ENGLAND DERMATOLOGY & LASER CENTER

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## **TREATMENT OF FACIAL BROWN SPOTS**

People who develop brown spots, also known as lentigines, have a genetic predisposition which is unmasked by chronic sunlight exposure and aging. The ultraviolet light which primarily promotes the development of brown spots is called UVA. This spectrum of ultraviolet light is present in the same intensity sunrise to sunset and all throughout the year. Therefore, wearing a sunblock on a daily basis may be preventative. Lentigines are generally harmless and appear as small and sometimes larger milky brown flat spots most apparent in sun exposed areas. Rarely very large lentigines may become malignant manifested by changing color and size. They are the result of melanocytes which are the pigment producing cells of the skin producing too much melanin, which is the brown pigment. They differ from moles which are generally hereditary and frequently, but not always are elevated above the surface of the skin and may or may not contain hair.

Brown spots are primarily of cosmetic concern and oftentimes patients seek removal. Bleaching creams may be of some modest benefit, but these are best treated with chemical peels, microdermabrasion cryotherapy, and optimally with lasers. In most cases, they can be removed with minimal down time and no scarring. Wearing a broad spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunblock SPF30 or greater containing zinc oxide/titanium dioxide on a daily basis may prevent recurrence and development of new lesions.