



PIGMENTATION

ORAL SKIN LIGHTENING AGENTS

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Brown skin is beautiful. Normally, for those who want to be fairer or unfortunately have disfiguring pigmentary alterations, topical hypopigmenting agents are prescribed, chemical peels advised and laser procedures maybe even be recommended in cases of difficult hyperpigmentation disorders.

Nowadays, skin lightening agents are available in the form of pills, lotions, creams, injections, and even soaps. They are easily available in supermarkets, drugstores and infrequently in doctor's clinics as well.

Oral skin lightening agents raise eyebrows and sceptics will be difficult to convince unless we show the mechanism of action and the evidence in clinical trials.

They are mostly antioxidants and work as photoprotective agents.

Procyanidin, melatonin, carotenoids, and polypodium leucotemus have been reported to be Reactive Oxygen Species (ROS) scavengers. Tranexamic acid works as an inhibitor of inflammation induced melanogenesis. Glutathione, a potent antioxidant, has been found out to be a tyrosinase inhibitor aside from being an ROS scavenger.

Miscellaneous: *Rhus verniciflua* stokes (RVS)

Animal studies - inhibitory action on melanin synthesis by blocking the tyrosinase enzyme in a dose dependent manner. Human studies are lacking till date.

Hippophae rhamnoides and *Cassia fistula* extracts as oral skin-lightening agents in Asian patients with melasma.

More evidence regarding the use of green tea, ellagic acid-rich pomegranate extract, coumarin extracts from the plant *Angelica dahurica*, epidermal growth factor and combinations of multiple natural extracts namely natural collagen extracts, bearberry extract, *Glycyrrhiza glabra* extract, grape seed extract, lycopene, kelp, olive leaf extract, hawthorn, jujube, sea buckthorn, starch, coix seed, pearl extracts, saponified sunflower and safflower oils are being awaited for skin lightening.

