

# Skin colour



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Melasma is a skin challenge that is commonly known as the mask of pregnancy or chloasma faciei and is known to be present in pregnant women. This skin disorder is a tan or a dark skin discolouration and can affect everyone but is usually common in women. The women affected are especially the pregnant ones who are taking contraceptives like oral or patch contraceptives or those who may do hormonal replacement therapy medications. The challenge can be experienced on fore arms by men women who are Native Americans and on the forehead by men and women from Germany or Russia and Jewish descendants. The disorder can be identified as a dark irregular patch on the forehead, cheek, upper lips, nose, forearm and nose. The patches in the long run will gradually develop overtime but it does not cause any other symptom apart from this discoloration.

It is assumed to be caused by pigment producing cells found in the female sex hormones the progesterone and oestrogen. These produce more melanin when the skin is exposed to the sun rays. Despite disappearing on the face seven months after pregnancy, this skin colouring can be treated by topical dipigmenting agents that will hasten the fading of the discoloured patches. Such agents include hydroquinone which can be found over the counter or when prescribed by a doctor. This chemical inhibits tyrosinase enzyme which produces the melanin. On the other hand, the pigmentation can disappear when one uses an acid Tretinoin which has been found to increase keratinocyte skin cell turnover and the azelaic acid which decreases the activities of the melanocytes.