

# Laser Melasma Treatment

*(Advanced options to help lighten melasma safely and gradually)*

## What Is Melasma?

**Melasma** is a chronic pigment condition that causes **brown or gray-brown patches**, most commonly on the **cheeks, forehead, upper lip, and chin**. It is often triggered or worsened by:

- Sun and heat exposure
- Hormonal changes (pregnancy, birth control)
- Genetics
- Certain medications or skincare irritation

Melasma is **not dangerous**, but it can be persistent and emotionally frustrating.



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## Can Melasma Be Treated With Lasers?

Yes — but **carefully**.

**Laser melasma treatment** uses specialized laser or light-based devices to help break up excess pigment and improve skin tone. However, melasma behaves differently from other dark spots, so treatment must be **conservative, customized, and combined with strict skincare and sun protection**.

Laser treatment is **not a cure**, but it can:

- Lighten melasma patches
- Improve overall tone and brightness
- Help resistant melasma respond when topical therapy alone is not enough

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## Why Melasma Requires a Specialized Approach

Unlike sun spots, melasma:

- Is influenced by **deep pigment and heat**
- Can **worsen** with aggressive laser settings
- Often needs **combination therapy**, not just one treatment

That's why we:

- Start conservatively
  - Choose pigment-safe laser settings
  - Combine laser with topical therapy and sun protection
  - Space treatments appropriately
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## What Types of Laser Treatments May Be Used

Depending on your skin type and melasma pattern, treatment may include:

- **Low-energy pigment lasers**
- **Fractional non-ablative lasers**
- **Laser toning approaches**
- Sometimes **IPL**, in carefully selected patients

Your dermatologist will choose the safest option for your skin.

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## What to Expect During Laser Melasma Treatment

Laser treatments are done **in the office** and typically take **20–30 minutes**.

**During treatment:**

1. Skin is cleansed
2. Protective eyewear is placed
3. Laser energy is delivered gently and evenly
4. Cooling and soothing products are applied

Most patients describe a **warm snapping or tingling sensation**.

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## When Will I See Results?

- Melasma often improves **gradually**
- Subtle lightening may be seen after a few sessions
- Best results occur with **multiple treatments over time**
- Maintenance therapy is often needed

Patience and consistency are key.

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## Pre-Op Instructions (Before Laser Melasma Treatment)

### 4 weeks before treatment

- **Avoid sun exposure and tanning** (including self-tanner)
- Use **broad-spectrum sunscreen daily**
- Wear hats and seek shade

### 1–2 weeks before

- Stop **retinoids, exfoliating acids, scrubs, and harsh products**
- Tell us if you:
  - Are pregnant or breastfeeding
  - Have a history of **post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH)**
  - Are prone to darkening after irritation
  - Have active rashes or skin infections

### Day of treatment

- Arrive with **clean skin** (no makeup or skincare on treatment area)
  - Avoid waxing or threading beforehand
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## Post-Op Instructions (After Laser Melasma Treatment)

## What's normal

- Mild redness or warmth for a few hours to 1–2 days
- Temporary darkening of pigment before lightening
- Mild swelling or sensitivity

## Aftercare

- Use gentle cleanser and bland moisturizer
- **Strict sun and heat avoidance** is critical
- Avoid hot yoga, saunas, and intense workouts for **48 hours**
- Avoid picking or scrubbing the skin
- Resume prescribed topical melasma treatments as directed

## Sun protection

This is the **most important step**:

- Broad-spectrum SPF 30–50 daily
- Reapply every 2 hours outdoors
- Hats and physical sun protection are strongly encouraged

## Call the office if

- Pigmentation darkens significantly or spreads
- You develop blistering, crusting, or severe irritation
- You notice signs of infection (pus, fever, increasing pain)

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## Who Is a Good Candidate?

Laser melasma treatment may be appropriate if:

- Melasma persists despite topical therapy
- You can commit to strict sun protection
- You understand that melasma is **chronic and relapsing**

Laser treatment may not be ideal if:

- You cannot avoid sun or heat exposure
  - You expect permanent cure after one session
  - You have active inflammation or infection
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# Laser Melasma Treatment FAQ

## Is laser treatment safe for melasma?

Yes — when done **carefully and conservatively**. Aggressive laser settings can worsen melasma, which is why treatment must be individualized.

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## How many treatments will I need?

Many patients need a **series of treatments**, often spaced several weeks apart, with ongoing maintenance.

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## Will melasma come back?

Melasma can recur, especially with sun or hormonal triggers. Maintenance therapy and sun protection help keep it under control.

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## Is laser better than topical treatments?

They work best **together**. Lasers are often used when topical therapy alone isn't enough.

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## Can laser treatment make melasma worse?

It can if done improperly or without sun protection. Our approach focuses on minimizing this risk.

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## Is laser melasma treatment covered by insurance?

Laser treatment for melasma is typically considered **cosmetic** and not covered by insurance.

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