

FACE TIME

GET EVEN

Having hyperpigmented melasma patches can feel like you're sporting unwanted tattoos—and, as dermatologists have discovered, the comparison isn't far off the mark. "When people have melasma, they have pigmentation in the epidermis, and often in the dermis as well," says NYC dermatologist Arielle Kauvar, MD, of the condition, which typically appears with surges in estrogen. While treatments such as topical hydroquinone work for women with superficial melasma, for those with the deeper variety, it's a different story. "They have a tattoo, essentially. They have melanin sitting in the dermis, and there's no way to get rid of it with topicals or superficial treatments," Kauvar says. Although aggressive lasers or other inflammation-inducing treatments can work counterproductively, causing the patches to get darker, the 1064 YAG laser, the same used for tattoo removal, "will break up that pigment into microscopic particles that your immune system clears away," says Kauvar, who precedes each session with microdermabrasion and follows with prescription pigment-suppressing topicals such as hydroquinone and tretinoin. The usual end result: 75 to 90 percent improvement in trenchant dark patches after three to five treatment sessions.

BEAD IT

Out-of-whack hormones can cause acne to pop up decades past our teens, but a novel treatment, Sebacia, achieves results with an odd coupling: gold-dipped glass nanoparticles and a hair-removal laser. In a recent study, researchers slathered subjects with a solution of the tiny gold particles, then used a handheld massager to vibrate them down to follicles and into oil glands. Next, doctors passed a laser over the skin, and its heat targeted the beads, damaging the overactive sebaceous glands. After three sessions spaced two weeks apart, patients had a 61 percent reduction in acne—an improvement that remained seven months later. Could this be a long-term fix? "That's the hope," says Kauvar, who is currently working on Sebacia's FDA trials.

PORE REPORT

"As we age, skin's connective tissue structure decreases and the pores get larger because they're not as constricted by surrounding collagen," New York-based derm Macrene Alexiades-Armenakas, MD, PhD, says. One solution: "inducing collagen in that layer right around the pore to tighten it," which she's currently accomplishing with eTwo, a fractional radio-frequency treatment that delivers

columns of energy to heat up underlying tissues and spark tissue regeneration. On patients who have gotten two sessions spaced a couple of months apart, she says, "I'm finding a significant reduction in pore size" as well as another benefit: "It also happens to work really well on wrinkles."

NEEDLE POINT

Microneedling, the low-tech yet effective way of boosting collagen by repeatedly and shallowly puncturing the skin with tiny needles, gets an upgrade with the innovative Aquagold Fine Touch, a glass vial topped with 20 hair-thin hollow needles that, as they perforate, deliver whatever liquid a doctor fills the vial with. "People definitely have a different glow and improved texture to their skin, and skin is more hydrated. We're getting radiance, plus improving fine lines and wrinkles," says Fredric Brandt, MD, who retextures tissue-paper skin on the face, neck, and hands by filling his Fine Touch with Belotero Balance, a low-viscosity hyaluronic acid that creates immediate dewiness and luminosity that lasts for a month. And because the needles bore straight into the dermis as they pass over the skin, there's less of an ouch factor and trauma than with roller techniques, which can cause microtears.

