

« PROBLEM SOLVER:  
ASK OUR BEAUTY EXPERT

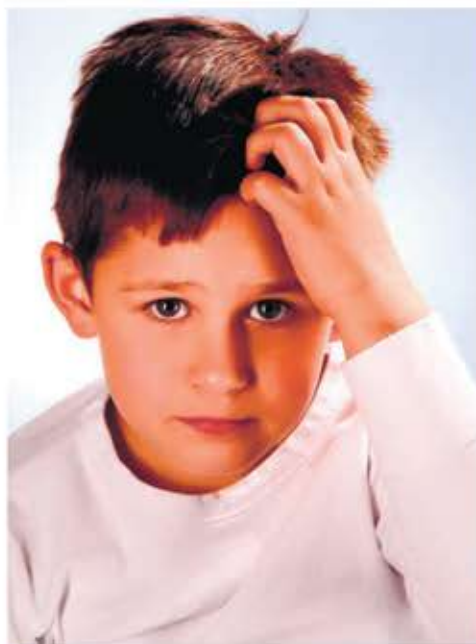


BARBARA, OUR BEAUTY EXPERT, WILL HELP FIX YOUR PROBLEMS

**Dear Barbara,**  
I have developed small, dry patches around my nose and mouth. They look very unsightly, and despite moisturising them twice a day, the flaky patches just won't go away! What should I do?

— Sunil Sathe, Malad

**Dear Sunil,**  
Dry, flaky patches are extremely common during winter, so there is absolutely nothing to worry about. While it is good that you are moisturising, you should do so essentially *after* you exfoliate. Exfoliating with a mild scrub removes the flakes so that when you apply a moisturiser, it hydrates your skin and not the flakes! So, exfoliate first and then apply a rich moisturiser. You can also soak a muslin cloth in raw, whole milk, wring it out and place it on such dry areas for 10-15 minutes before washing it off with water. This helps soothe and hydrate your skin.



>> Dandruff is not contagious

**Dear Barbara,**  
My son is 8-years-old and has been scratching his head a lot recently. I checked his head for lice, and instead found that he has dandruff. While I have switched his shampoo to an anti-dandruff one, I am worried that I will develop dandruff too! Is it contagious? What can I do to get rid of it?

— Mohina Kaul, Santacruz (w)

**Dear Mohina,**  
First off, let us put you at ease by telling you that dandruff isn't contagious. So, rest assured that you won't contract it from your son. Now, as far as treating it goes, you've done the right thing by switching his shampoo to an anti-dandruff one. Apart from this, you can also use a mixture of apple cider vinegar and water to wash his hair — this is an all-natural remedy that will soothe his scalp. But, if you notice swelling, oozing and redness, take your child to a doctor immediately, as it could be a case of eczema, psoriasis or ringworm.

>> Skin lightening creams can do more harm than good



# UNDERSTANDING SKIN PRODUCTS

The market is inundated with products that promise to heal sunburnt skin, even out your skin tone and reduce tan. But, if you're confused as to which products to pick, **Dev Goswami** has a helpful guide

**H**as your skin become heavily tanned by the harsh sun? Use this product. Suffer from patchy skin? This skin cream will take care of it — we're sure that you're frequently bombarded by promotional material for creams, gels and masks that promise to take care of all your skin woes. But, look past the attractive packaging and you'll discover that the world of skincare is a very confusing place. So, today we separate fact from fiction and tell you all that you need to know about skin toners and lighteners.

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Are you wondering why we haven't mentioned the word fairness yet? It's not just because we are against the concept of fairness as it is sold (we are — but, that's a story for another time), but because as far as dermatology is concerned, fairness creams aren't even real. Dr. Apratim Goel, cosmetic dermatologist and laser surgeon at Cutis Skin Studio, explains, "Fairness creams are a term coined by the media and cosmetic companies as a marketing gimmick. What we have in the medical world are creams that help lighten skin tone, reduce your tan, cure blemishes and even out your skin tone."

## HOW THEY WORK

Most creams and masks available in the market lighten your skin by restricting the production of melanin — the presence of which makes your skin appear darker. Dr. Apratim explains, "Melanin formation is a multi-step process and most products block melanin formation, which results in lighter skin." However, not all products that stop the production of melanin are good for your skin. Look for ingredients such as tretinoin and vitamin C, as they repair your skin and help to keep it wrinkle-free. Dr. Shefali Trasi Nerurkar, from Dr. Trasi's Clinic, adds, "These products are definitely beneficial for your skin. However, people should understand that one cannot become

fairer than they already are. The point of these creams is to remove tan and restore your complexion to its original colour."

## THE TYPES

While you won't find any difference in various skin lightening creams if you only read the labels, check their ingredients and you'll notice different compounds and concentrations. Dr. Apratim tells us that these products primarily differ in strength and concentration. As long as they have the required ingredients (see next point), they all help even out your skin tone and fade a tan. However, don't make the mistake of picking creams with higher concentration for quicker results. Dr. Apratim explains that such creams are meant for patchy skin and even then, work only for a limited period of time.

## PICKING ONE

The best way to pick a cream is to check its ingredient list, instead of its attractive packaging. Dr. Shefali tells us that for sun damaged skin, look for ingredients such as vitamin C, copper peptides and retinol. Dr. Apratim further adds, "Hydroquinone (1-4%), glutathione, kojic acid, Tretinoin, AHAs (alpha hydroxyl acid), BHAs (beta hydroxyl acids) and azelaic acid all help in lightening your skin and removing tan. Hydroquinone is the most effective ingredient when it comes to treating patchy skin or skin patches that are a result of hormonal imbalances."

On the other hand, if you have uneven skin all over your body and simply want to even it out, Dr. Apratim recommends opting for milder ingredients such as liquorice, kojic acid, lactic acid, mandelic acid, vitamin C and AHAs in a reduced concentration. She also tells us that before you pick a product, it would be a good idea to consult a dermatologist to ensure that you aren't harming your skin further.