
Before You See a Dermatologist: A Checklist

This checklist doesn't give a score and doesn't replace a diagnosis. It helps you tell your story clearly in a short appointment. Fill it in beforehand, take it with you, and copy it as often as you like.

Don't wait for an appointment if...

- your lips, tongue or face swell, or you have trouble breathing, after using a product or medicine;
- after a filler injection: severe pain, skin turning white or dusky purple, blurred vision;
- while taking oral tranexamic acid: a swollen, painful leg, sudden shortness of breath, chest pain;
- signs of a fast-spreading skin infection: hot, red skin that's spreading, pus, fever.

In any of these cases, call emergency services or go to a health facility right away.

What to bring

- ☐ Photos of the problem area, if it changes over time (for example, acne before a period, brown spots after summer)
- ☐ Every product you've put on your skin in the past 3 months, or photos of their ingredient lists
- ☐ A list of every medicine, supplement and herbal product you take, with doses (including biotin)
- ☐ Your shelf audit and product trial diary, if you have them
- ☐ This checklist, filled in

Your one-sentence summary

Write it before you go. For example: *"My main problem is deep spots along my jaw. It's been going on for about a year and gets worse before my period. I've used benzoyl peroxide and adapalene for three months, and it's about half better."*

Moles and pigment spots (Chapters 4, 11, 13)

Do any of your spots have these signs?

- ☐ **A:** asymmetry (the two halves don't match)
- ☐ **B:** a ragged or uneven border
- ☐ **C:** several colors, or uneven color
- ☐ **D:** larger than about 6 mm (a pencil eraser), or growing
- ☐ **E:** evolving in size, shape or color; itching or bleeding
- ☐ One spot that looks "different" from all the others
- ☐ A sore or scaly patch that hasn't healed after about four weeks

Acne (Chapter 10)

- ☐ Deep, painful nodules, or scarring
- ☐ No improvement after 12 weeks of consistent over-the-counter treatment
- ☐ Irregular periods, excess hair on the face or chest, hair thinning
- ☐ Acne that started after a new medicine
- ☐ Acne that makes me feel low or avoid people

Brown spots and melasma (Chapter 11)

- ☐ Symmetrical brown patches on both cheeks, the forehead or upper lip
- ☐ Patches that appeared or worsened in pregnancy, on the pill or after summer
- ☐ I've used mixed or unlabeled whitening creams. For how long?

- ☐ Blue-black or gray-black skin where I applied a cream

Red, burning, itchy skin (Chapter 12)

- ☐ Persistent redness on the cheeks and nose, episodes of flushing, visible blood vessels

- ☐ Repeated reactions to several different products
- ☐ A cream that clears redness instantly but brings it back when I stop.
Name: _____
- ☐ Things that make my face flush: _____

Questions I want to ask

- What is this? Do I need tests, a biopsy or patch testing?
- Which treatment has the best evidence for me? How long until I see results?
- What are the common side effects? When should I come back?
- Which of my current products can I stop?
- If I'm pregnant, trying to conceive or breastfeeding, does the treatment need to change?
