

LIVER SPOTS, THE CURSE OF SUMMER

“What are these white spots on my body?” concerned patients often ask me. That's the summer souvenir you get for all the time spent in the heat and the sun!

BEFORE



AFTER



The medical term for "liver spots" is pityriasis versicolor (“PV”). PV is caused by a yeast-like fungus called *Pityrosporum*. These are harmless fungi that live on the skin without causing any problem. Hot and humid weather conditions cause increase perspiration and high sebum (oil) production by the skin, thereby creating the perfect environment for the fungi to multiply and spread. This is why this condition is common in Jamaica.

The other conditions that also promote the multiplication of fungi are

- a) Wearing synthetic clothing for prolonged period when playing sports
- b) Poor personal hygiene.

When the aforementioned conditions exist, the fungi multiply quickly leaving behind a mild, itchy and scaly rash. Typically, the rash starts as small round pale patches on the areas of the skin exposed to the sun i.e. arm and face. The rash may also appear as scaly brown patches. The patches may merge together and form a large continuous area of discoloration. PV is commonly seen on the neck, arm, chest and back. In the more severe cases the entire body may be affected.

PV patches that are brown or dark brown usually goes away immediately after treatment. The lighter areas may take six weeks to three months to regain color. This is because the fungi produce a chemical, which inhibits the normal production of pigment in the affected skin, resulting in areas of paler skin tone. The uneven skin tone is unsightly and may cause social embarrassment.

This condition is not serious or contagious. The reason why people seek treatment is because they are very self-conscious, especially in the summer months, when the skin is more exposed.

Management:-

Prevention is better than cure as recurrence is very common!

- Bathe more often with AriSulfer bar/ ariBrite tone bar or with BOTH for faster result to remove the fungi.
- Make a foam with the sponge and apply to affected area and leave on to dry for overnight for quicker results. This method ensure the fungi are killed and the infected epidermis are dissolved before bathing.
- As soon as you finish exercising, you should change into clean dry clothing. Avoid synthetic clothing which keep the sweat in.

If the rash is over a large area of your skin and has not cleared after the above treatments, seek the advice of your doctor/ dermatologist who will prescribe a course of tablets to clear the condition.

