

Kojic Acid

Kojic acid is an ingredient used in skin lightening products for its ability to inhibit the activity of tyrosinase, an enzyme necessary for the synthesis of melanin, the skin's pigment. This makes it useful in the treatment of Melasma, chloasma and other hyperpigmentation disorders.

Kojic acid is obtained from fungus or as a by product in the fermentation process used to make sake, the Japanese rice wine. It is consumed widely in Japan for its perceived health benefits. In fact, it possesses antibacterial, antifungal and antioxidant properties, and is used to prevent fruits from turning brown, to preserve the pink and red color of seafood and in cosmetics to lighten skin.

Kojic Acid as A Skin Lightening Agent

Millions of individuals worldwide suffer from skin discoloration so it's useful to have yet another possibility in helping to rectify the situation. In skin lightening preparations, kojic acid is included in concentrations ranging from 1-4%. Studies have shown it to be as effective in lightening skin as hydroquinone, however the two combined is much more effective. And, in a comparison study, 2% hydroquinone, 10% glycolic acid, and 2% kojic acid decreased hyperpigmentation in patients with Melasma better than the same combination without kojic acid.

Kojic acid's major drawback is that it can cause skin sensitivity and contact dermatitis in some individuals. This may manifest as redness, rashes or even blisters.