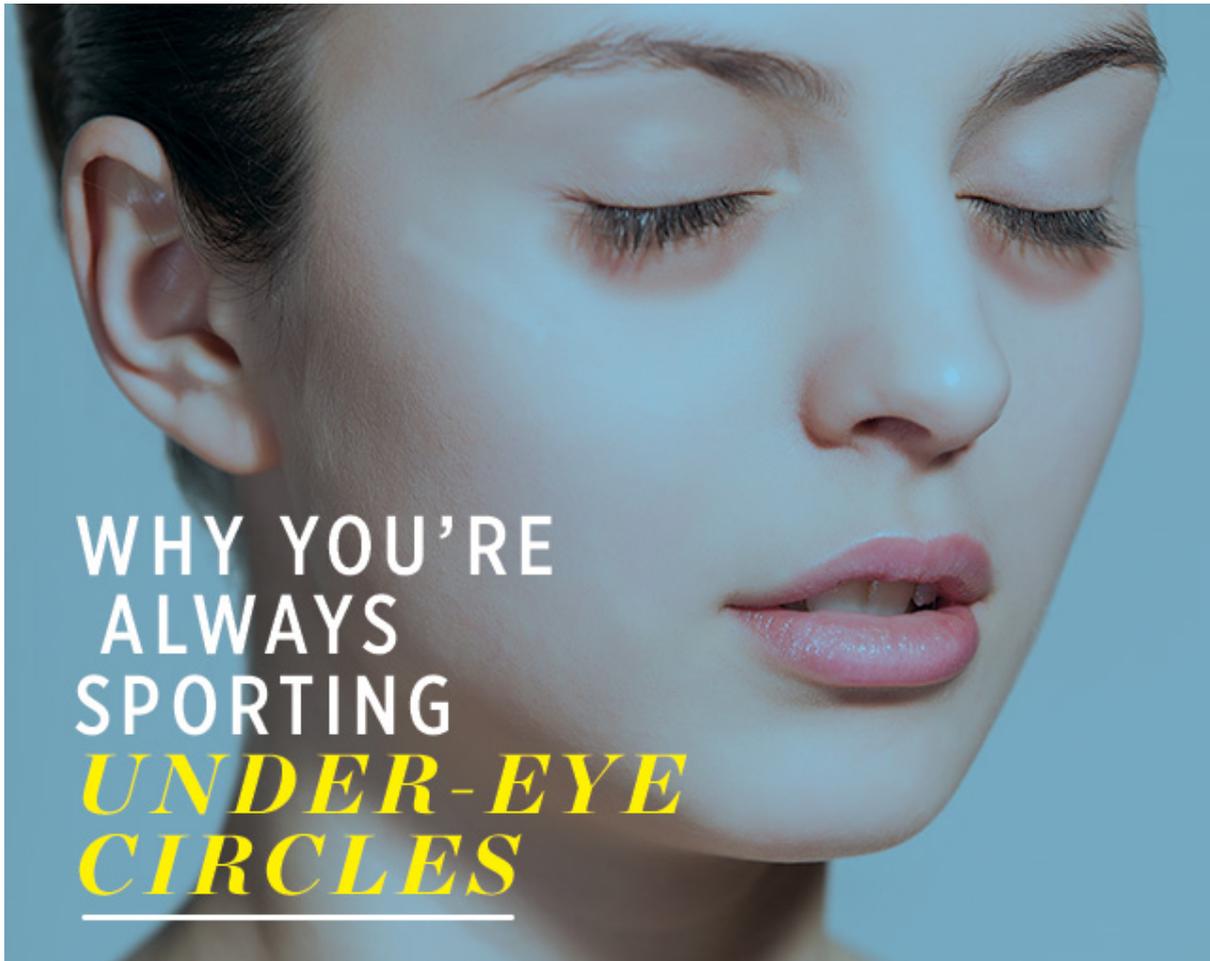


# The Reasons Why You Look So Tired —Even When You're Not

Wake up your face!

BY SHANNON FARRELL *April 20, 2015*

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Show of hands if this sounds familiar: You get the recommend eight hours of sleep and wake up feeling rejuvenated and ready for the day —but when you go to look in the mirror, you realize with horror that you've got some massive dark circles under your eyes. What the eff? Sadly, even if you get plenty of shuteye every night, there are plenty of other reasons you may still look tired. Here's the deal:

## **What Causes Dark Circles?**

You may have your mom to thank for your under-eye darkness, since it's often hereditary. "Some people, especially those who have olive or darker complexions, just genetically have dark circles under their eyes," says [Rebecca Kazin](#), M.D., a dermatologist at the Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery in Washington, D.C. When it comes to skin tone and under-eye circles, women with darker complexions often deal with hyperpigmentation, which happens when areas of skin become darker due to an overabundance of

melanin, the pigment that gives skin its color.

Dark circles also often become more visible as you get older. Because the skin under your eyes is so thin and gets even thinner as you age, the blood that's pooled beneath the surface becomes more obvious. "[The area under your eye] ages faster than the rest of your face because the skin is so thin," says Kazin. And large dark circles, also referred to as hollowness, are the result of losing volume under the eyes.

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Allergies are another culprit. That's right: The skin under your eyes can actually start looking darker if you rub your eyes a lot from allergy symptoms, says Kazin. What's more, your eating habits could also be to blame. Poor nutrition or crash dieting can contribute to dark circles since "rapid fluctuations of weight cause you to also lose volume in your face," says Kazin.

### **Can They Be Prevented?**

Your best bet for stopping dark circles before they start is to focus on living a healthy lifestyle, says Kazin. You should definitely avoid things that damage or accelerate aging, like unprotected sun exposure and smoking. Unfortunately, if the cause is genetics, there's no way to prevent them (but trying one of the treatment options below may help reduce their appearance).

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### **How Can Dark Circles Be Treated?**

Start off by trying a moisturizer that's specifically formulated for the eye area. "I do recommend creams, but I tend to manage patients' expectations [about results]," says Kazin. "The problem is that they can't put strong ingredients in eye creams because the eyelid is so sensitive. So some of the ingredients we'd use for brown spots on the face are too irritating for the eye." Most formulas focus on adding intense hydration, which does have its benefits, says Kazin. We're fans of **PCA Skin Ideal Complex Restorative Eye Cream** (\$82, [pcaskin.com](https://www.pcaskin.com)), which contains niacinamide, various bark extracts, and orange stem cell extract to treat not only dark circles, but puffiness, fine lines, and sagging skin.



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Fillers (yes, like Botox) can also help with both sallowness (discoloration with a yellow tint) and dark circles, says Kazin. "Because there aren't any creams that really treat sallowness, I recommend patients use a tiny bit of filler to add more volume," she says. Although a filler can't actually remove dark circles, "it adds volume, and that makes the eye more reflective so it just looks lighter," says Kazin. Laser treatments may also help to ease under-eye discoloration caused by hyperpigmentation. In particular, Intense Pulse Light can be used under the eyes. If a cream just isn't cutting it, ask your dermatologist if this could be an option for you.