

NON-ABLATIVE LASER TREATMENT PRE & POST CARE INSTRUCTIONS

PRE-TREATMENT INSTRUCTIONS

- Tell your doctor if you are taking Accutane or have taken it in the past six months.
- Avoid having a suntan or using sprayed lotion (tanner/bronzer) before treatment.
- You cannot be treated if you are pregnant.

TREATMENT

- When you arrive, a topical anesthetic gel will be applied to your skin for about one hour. You may wish to bring something to read to help to pass the time.
- The entire treatment varies in length of time, but usually takes up to two hours to complete.
- Although there can be some areas treated that feel sensitive, the laser is generally well tolerated.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER TREATMENT

Non-ablative Laser Treatment produces side effects. The intensity and duration of your side effects depends on the treatment's aggressiveness and your individual healing characteristics. Generally, patients who are treated more aggressively experience more intense and longer lasting side effects; however, some patients who receive a less aggressive treatment may experience side effects of greater-than-expected magnitude, while others receiving more aggressive treatments may experience side effects of less-than-expected magnitude. Notify your physician if the severity of your side effects becomes a problem for you.

WHAT YOU MAY FEEL AND LOOK LIKE:

- Immediately after the treatment, you will experience **redness, swelling** and sometimes **pinpoint bleeding**. You will notice most of the swelling on the first morning after treatment, particularly under the eyes. Swelling usually lasts two to three days. To minimize swelling do the following:
 - Apply cold compresses to the treatment area for 10 minutes of every hour on the day of treatment, until you go to bed.
 - Sleep elevated the first night. Use as many pillows as you can tolerate.
- **Heat sensation** can be intense for the following 2 - 3 hours. Occasionally **oozing** can occur in isolated areas for a few days as well.
- Over the next few days, redness may worsen. Swelling may be significant and cause some discomfort.
- You may also notice that your skin appears bronzed or **little dark dots** will appear on the treated area. Your skin may feel dry, peel, or flake. You may notice a "sandpaper" texture a few days after treatment. This is the treated tissue working its way out of your body as new fresh skin is regenerated.
- This dead skin is a normal result of laser treatment and should start **sloughing** off 3 - 4 days after the treatment. Most patients complete this process 5 - 7 days after a treatment on the face. (On off-face areas, such as hands/arms, where healing is slower, the process may take up to 2 weeks). Do not pick off the sloughing skin.
- Once the sloughing is complete, you may notice some **pinkness** over the next few weeks. Most redness resolves during the first week after treatment, but a rosy "glow" can remain for several weeks. If you wish, you can apply makeup to minimize the redness.
- Some patients have also experienced **itching**.

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR SKIN AFTER TREATMENT

Congratulations! You have taken the first step toward more healthy and radiant looking skin by having a non-ablative laser treatment. Now it is important to help your skin heal quickly and protect your skin investment.

- **Immediately After Treatment.** Use a gentle, unscented moisturizer (i.e. Cetaphil or Vanicream) or a very thin layer of petrolatum ointment (i.e. Aquaphor or Vanicream Healing Ointment). Use petrolatum ointment to cover any area with oozing and keep moist. Use of icepacks helps alleviate the heat sensation. You may also cleanse your face with a mild cleanser.
 - We recommend using Alastin Regenerating Skin Nectar, which is available for purchase at our office and on our website - this product has been shown to enhance treatment outcomes and reduce recovery time.
 - White vinegar soaks (approximately 1:6 ratio of vinegar to ice water) can be helpful every 1-2 hours immediately following treatment to minimize burning sensation and swelling.
- **First Few Days.** Continue cleansing and moisturizing over the next few days. Once the sloughing starts, please allow your skin to heal and **DO NOT** scrub, rub, or use exfoliants. Keep clothing away from treated body parts as much as possible to avoid irritation. Use a clean pillowcase each night.
- **First Week of Healing.** Keep the treated area clean; avoid smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, excessive exercise, perspiring, swimming, or exposing skin to heat and sun.
- **Skin Care Products.** All your skin care products should be non-irritating and non-comedogenic (pore clogging) for the first week or so after treatment. Examples of brands that offer very gentle formulas are: Aveeno, Neutrogena, Vanicream, Alastin and Cetaphil.
- **Scrubs, Toners, Glycolic Acid, and Retin A.** Your skin will be sensitive for the first week or so after treatment. Do not use products that will cause irritation during this time. Do not use abrasive scrubs, toners, or products that contain glycolic acids or Retinol. *Read the product labels.*
- **Normal Skin Care Regimen.** Once the sloughing is complete, you may resume your routine skin care and make-up products, if they are tolerable to you.
- **Sunscreen.** It is very important that you use sunscreen to prevent sun damage to the new skin cells at the surface. Sunscreen should offer broadband protection (UVA and UVB) and have a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or more. Use sunscreen daily for at least 3 months after your last treatment. Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside, and again, immediately before. Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours. If you cannot avoid time in the sun, wear a hat and clothing that covers the treated area. Your practice of diligent sunscreen use may lower the risk of laser-induced hyperpigmentation (darker color). We recommend using a physical blocker (aka Mineral SPF) while your skin is healing - it is less likely to cause irritation and provides excellent protection. Look for a formula with Zinc or Titanium Dioxide and apply it as the last step in your skincare routine.
- **Moisturizer.** Remember that peeling and/or flaking is normal during the healing process. Therefore, the moisturizer you use should be non-irritating and non-clogging, or else you could develop breakouts. During the healing period, your normal moisturizer may be too occlusive, so consider gentle products from the brands listed above. Reapply whenever your skin feels dry and remember to apply your mineral SPF 30 overtop during the daytime.
- **Bleaching Creams.** Discontinue use of your bleaching cream while your skin is tender. Ask your physician when you can start using your bleaching cream.
- **Resume your normal skin care regimen when your skin has fully healed.**
- **Cold Sores.** If you have a history of cold sores, we will give you medication pre- and post- treatment to prevent recurrence of cold sores.
- **Abnormal Healing.** If you notice any blisters, cuts, bruises, crusting/scabs, areas of raw skin, ulcerations, active bleeding, oozing or honey crust, increased discomfort or pain, pigment changes (lighter or darker than usual complexion), or any other problems, please contact us as soon as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the office at 203-635-0770.