



Laser Skin Resurfacing & IPL

Laser skin resurfacing is a popular cosmetic procedure that can help rejuvenate the skin and reduce the effects of sun, aging and some facial skin disorders. Treatments are safe, effective, and convenient. Laser skin rejuvenation or laser peel as it is often called, removes damaged outer layers of skin with pin point accuracy, stimulates the production of collagen and new skin cells in the underlying layers bringing about smoother, younger, healthier-looking skin.

Cosmetic laser skin resurfacing is a method for diminishing the appearance of imperfections on the skin's surface. During the laser skin resurfacing procedure a laser is used to dissolve the molecular bonds of the damaged skin cells layer by layer until a smoother, more uniform skin appearance is achieved. The procedure may also be referred to as laser skin rejuvenation because of its anti-aging benefits, or laser peel because the damaged layers of skin are peeled away.

Laser skin resurfacing is appropriate for patients seeking treatment for discoloration, wrinkles, sun damage, acne marks, or other types of imperfections in skin appearance. The procedure does have limitations and individuals with severe scarring may need to use additional scar revision techniques to achieve the best possible results. For most patients the laser skin resurfacing procedure does an excellent job of diminishing the appearance of lines and wrinkles, scars, and irregular skin pigmentation however this treatment is not compatible with certain skin types, skin tones, and medical conditions. When considering any form of laser treatment it is important to first consult your doctor and a dermatologist to discover if you are a good candidate for laser skin resurfacing or any of the other laser related processes available.

There are various types of laser treatments that are used, the most popular being Fraxel® skin resurfacing treatment, Erbium, CO2 laser and IPL (Intense Pulsed Light) laser treatments.

The Fraxel® laser skin resurfacing treatment procedure is non-invasive, there are few post-treatment side effects, virtually no skin tenderness or pain after undergoing treatment and no downtime after the procedure. It should be noted however, depending on the type and extent of work to be done this is usually not a single session treatment. Improvements to the skin's appearance will appear gradually over the course of weeks or months possibly with progressive treatments.

Erbium lasers are able to remove thinner layers of skin than the more powerful, but less precise CO2 laser. Erbium lasers are often a better choice for patients with dark skin because there is less risk of permanent changes to skin pigmentation. They are also better for patients with generally healthy skin who wish to treat only minimal fine lines and wrinkles.

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The CO2 laser is the highest intensity laser treatment currently available. After being treated with the CO2 laser the surface of the skin appears tighter and smoother because the laser uses heat to restrict the collagen bands found in the lower dermis. The CO2 laser can eliminate or diminish the appearance of most wrinkles, scars, warts and birthmarks.

Many people can't tolerate the downtime or may otherwise not be good candidates for laser skin resurfacing. In these cases, intense pulsed light (IPL) therapy may be an option. With IPL treatments there are no blisters, burns or long recovery periods so you can go right back to your life after your treatment is complete.

In a nutshell, IPL uses broad-spectrum light that filters out unwanted wavelengths as a means of treating a host of skin conditions and abnormalities such as: age spots, so called liver spots, fine lines and wrinkles, facial flushing, redness, broken capillaries, freckles, minor sun damage, port wine stains, tattoos, varicose veins, flat birthmarks, hair and large pores.

This IPL skin treatment goes by many other names, including: Computer Controlled Light Therapy, Light Laser, MultiLight, Photo Laser and various other brand names. There are several different machines that emit different wavelengths of IPL to penetrate different distances into the skin so it is best to discuss fully with your doctor or dermatologist the most appropriate treatment for you. Also discuss your candidacy for any skin treatments and your expectations with your regular doctor and/or a dermatologist who will examine your skin, any scars you have and may require you to have a patch test to see how you react to a proposed procedure. You are not a good candidate for IPL if you do not react well to burns or if you have diabetes.

Frequently asked questions:

- Who are laser skin treatments for?
- What can I expect?
- What does the procedure involve?
- What will recovery look like?
- What are the possible risks or complications?

Who are laser skin treatments for?

Laser skin resurfacing is an effective procedure for patients with lines, wrinkles, uneven pigmentation, or superficial facial scars such as acne scarring that does not respond to gentler treatments, also patients who are diagnosed with Rosacea, a condition where the skin on the



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face turns red. The ideal candidate for laser skin resurfacing has elastic, non-oily skin that is not prone to scarring after minor injury. It is best that laser skin resurfacing be performed on a person who is free of any medical considerations, including prescription medication and existing health conditions that might cause unnecessary risk during the procedure or recovery period.

Persons with lighter skin tones are better candidates for this particular procedure than persons with darker skin tones because there is less risk of unexpected side effects such as permanent skin discoloration.

What can I expect?

During the first twenty four hours of any skin treatment, your skin would feel as if it is sunburned while the appearance would be red or pink skin. Your skin would look naturally bronze over a couple of weeks. The skin will exfoliate itself and this effect can be reduced with the use of regular moisturizing. Laser skin treatments help the skin to produce new tissues and collagen to give you a smoother, fresher looking and feeling skin.

What does the procedure involve?

Laser treatments are a short procedure which generally last a few minutes to an hour or more depending on the extent of work required. With most treatments the skin is cleansed and an anesthetic ointment is applied sixty minutes before the actual painless procedure begins.

If you opt for IPL treatment the doctor will apply a topical anesthetic to the treatment area. After this a cold gel is applied and a glass prism is placed over the treatment area. Pulses of intense light will be flashed through the prism, directed at the treatment area. The treated area may be slightly pink or red right after your treatment and possibly some mild swelling. You may require several treatments depending on the extent of work to be done.

Regardless of which treatment you choose each will be customised for the individual patient. You will be instructed on what (and what not) to do for the two weeks before your first treatment. This will likely include staying out of the sun and avoiding certain medications that may increase bleeding risk, such as aspirin and ibuprofen.



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What will recovery be like?

The recovery can take anywhere between two to four weeks, during which there may be chances of red or pink skin. This skin is similar to a sun burnt skin leaving you with a bronzed look for a few days which eventually settles down and your skin regains its natural sheen.

What are the possible risks or complications?

Usually laser skin treatments are very safe for people of all age groups. However, there could be complications if the right treatment is not chosen for a given condition or expected outcomes thus in order not to be disappointed or expose yourself to discomfort or unnecessary risks consult your personal doctor and/or a dermatologist, discuss your health history, your needs and aspirations so an informed decision can be made leading to a successful outcome for you.