



Editorial Note on Laser Skin Resurfacing

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Introduction

Laser skin resurfacing is a skin care procedure performed by a dermatologist or physician. It involves lasers to help improve skin texture and appearance.

Depending on your individual skin, the dermatologist may recommend either ablative or non-ablative lasers. Ablative lasers include carbon dioxide or Erbium. CO2 laser resurfacing treatments are used to get rid of scars, warts, and deep wrinkles. Erbium is used for finer lines and wrinkles, along with other superficial skin concerns. Both types of ablative lasers remove outside layers of the skin.

Non-ablative lasers, on the other hand, don't remove any skin layers. These include pulsed light, pulsed-dye lasers, and fractional lasers. Non-ablative lasers may be used for rosacea, spider veins, and acne-related skin concerns.

Keep reading to learn more about how the procedure works, why it's done, possible side effects, and more.

You might consider this procedure if you have age-, sun-, or acne-related skin care concerns that aren't treatable with over-the-counter (OTC) products.

Keywords

Psoriasis; Scars; Warts

Laser skin resurfacing can be used to treat the following skin concerns

- age spots
- scars
- acne scars
- fine lines and wrinkles
- crow's feet
- Sagging skin
- Uneven skin tone
- Enlarged oil glands
- Warts

Your natural skin tone can determine whether this is the best type of cosmetic procedure for you.

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People with lighter skin tones are generally good candidates because they carry a less risk for hyperpigmentation.

However, there is a misconception that laser skin resurfacing is only for light skin only. The key is working with a dermatologist or physician who knows which types of lasers work best for darker skin tones (e.g., Erbium lasers).

This procedure may not be suitable for people with acne breakouts or excessive sagging skin.

This procedure is recommended during fall or winter. This can help decrease sun exposure, which can damage delicate skin.

Laser skin resurfacing targets the outer layer of the skin while simultaneously heating the lower layers in the dermis. This will promote collagen production.

collagen fibers will help produce new skin that is smoother in texture and firmer to the touch.

The procedure involves the following steps:

1. Before laser skin resurfacing, your skin needs to be prepared. This involves a series of treatments done several weeks prior to the procedure. The purpose is to increase your skin's tolerance to professional treatments. It can also decrease your risk for side effects.

2. On the day of the procedure, your doctor will apply a topical anesthetic to the area being treated. This is used to reduce pain and make you more comfortable during the procedure. If a large area of skin is being treated, your doctor may suggest a sedative or pain killers.

3. Next, the skin is cleansed to remove any excess oil, dirt, and bacteria.

4. Your doctor begins the treatment, using the selected laser. The laser is moved slowly around the designated area of skin.

5. Finally, your doctor will dress the treatment area in wraps to help protect the skin at the end of the procedure.

Risk factors

Like other cosmetic procedures, laser skin resurfacing does pose the risk for side effects.

These include:

- burning
- bumps
- rash
- swelling

- infection
- hyperpigmentation
- scars
- redness

By following your doctor's pre-care and post-care instructions, you may reduce your risk for these types of complications. Depending on your medical history, you may be prescribed a precautionary antibiotic or antiviral medication.

Taking acne medications, such as isotretinoin (Accutane), may increase your risk for scars. You should talk to your dermatologist about any medical conditions you have, as well as all medications you take — including OTCs. Aspirin, for example, can affect post-laser treatment recovery by increasing your bleeding risk.

ABCS recommends that you quit smoking for at least two weeks prior to this procedure. Smoking after laser resurfacing can also increase your risk for side effects.

Although some dermatologic surgeons perform laser resurfacing, these procedures aren't classified as surgeries. You can leave your doctor's office immediately following the procedure.

Still, downtime and recovery are necessary to make sure your skin heals properly. This reduces your risk for side effects and helps you achieve the desired results.

Side effects and duration

Healing usually takes between 3 and 10 days. As a general rule, the bigger the treatment area and the deeper the laser, the longer the recovery time. Recovery from ablative laser treatment, for example, may take up to three weeks.

During recovery, your skin may be extremely red and scab over. Slight peeling will occur. You can use ice packs to help reduce any swelling.

While you don't need to be at home during the entire recovery process, you'll want to avoid known areas of germs such as the gym — that could increase your risk of infection

Cleansing

You'll also need to adjust your daily skin care routine. According to the ASPS, you'll need to clean the treated area two to five times per day. Instead of your usual cleanser, you'll use a saline or vinegar-based solution recommended by your doctor.

You'll also need to use new dressings to ensure your skin stays clean.

A daily moisturizer can also help with the healing process, but be sure to run this by your doctor first.

Protection

Your skin may be sun sensitive for up to one year following each laser skin resurfacing procedure. Wearing sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 30 can help reduce your risk for sunburn and sun damage.

You should apply sunscreen every morning (even when it's cloudy) to protect your skin. Make sure to reapply as needed throughout the day

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