

Laser Treatments

This handout describes different laser treatments. These include:

1. Broadband light (BBL)
2. Laser peels
3. Laser for blood vessels
4. Halo laser
5. Skin tightening laser (Skintyte™)
6. Scar laser (profractional laser)

Please review before your clinic visit. You can discuss your options with your doctor and decide what might be right for you.

1. Broadband Light (BBL)

This is sometimes called “IPL” or “photofacial.” It is used for brown spots caused by sun and age, red discoloration, bruises, rosacea.

How It Works

This is a laser for pigment and color irregularities. We adjust the wavelength of the laser to target brown, red or blue lesions. In most cases 3 sessions are needed, spaced 4-8 weeks apart. Sometimes more sessions are needed.

What It Does Not Do

This laser will not help you with wrinkles (lines). If you continue to expose skin to sun, the brown spots will return. Do not expect the treatment to last for a lifetime.

Risks

Complications are rare after BBL. The most common complication is not enough correction of the skin condition being treated. Other uncommon complications include healing with more or less skin pigment (color), bruising and skin peeling.

About the Procedure

The procedure takes between 3-10 minutes. We place cold gel on the area being treated, and special goggles on the eye. The laser itself feels like quick sharp snaps. Many people tolerate it well and describe it as simply a discomfort. Others prefer to come in 45 minutes early to apply a numbing cream to help decrease the pain.

Getting Ready

Use sunblock and avoid sun exposure for 2 weeks before the procedure.

Recovery

Most people get back to work and regular life right after the procedure. Some people have redness and minor swelling. This is usually gone within a few hours. The targeted spots may appear darker right after the procedure. In rare situations there is a small bruise, usually in the lower eyelid. Avoid heavy exercise for a few hours after the procedure. Use sunblock and avoid sun exposure for 4 weeks after the procedure.

2. Laser Peels

This is also known as contour or resurfacing laser. This is the best laser for lines (wrinkles) and for some skin tightening. It can give healthier, younger-looking skin.

How It Works

As the name suggests, the laser “peels” away the outer layers of skin. We can control the depth of the laser which affects healing time. It varies from a laser that heals in few hours to one that heals in 10 days. The deeper the laser, the better the effect and the longer the recovery. It can be done in one session or repeated if needed or requested.

Risks

These include healing with more or less pigment, persistent redness, scarring, and infection.

About the Procedure

You will need to arrive 45 minutes before the procedure to apply numbing cream. We will likely also give you local anesthetic injections (numbing shots, just like at the dentist). The procedure takes 10-30 minutes based on the depth of the laser. The laser is loud, so you can bring headphones with you to listen to your favorite music or simply for noise reduction.

Getting Ready

Use sunblock and avoid sun exposure for 2 weeks before the procedure.

Recovery

This is an invasive laser associated with significant healing time. The time it takes for healing depends on the depth of the laser. We will give you instructions and the skin care products you need to use till your skin heals.

You will need to take a few days off from work and social activities. We will give you medicines for the pain after the surgery. Pain is often much better after 48 hours. Your skin will feel very warm for the first few hours after the procedure. After your skin has healed, you should start using sun block and avoid sun exposure for 4 weeks. You will be given antibiotics and antivirals after the procedure.

3. Laser for Blood Vessels

This is a laser for the fine blood vessels (telangiectasia or spider veins) that can develop with age and sun exposure.

How It Works

The laser is used at a very specific wavelength that targets the blood vessels. It can be done in one session or repeated if needed or requested.

About the Procedure

The procedure takes 1-10 minutes based on the number of vessels being treated. There is very little discomfort. You can arrive 45 minutes before the procedure to apply numbing cream, although the laser is very well tolerated without it.

Getting Ready

Use sunblock and avoid sun exposure for 2 weeks before the procedure.

Recovery

You can get back to work and regular life right after the procedure. Some people have redness and minor swelling that is often gone within a few hours. Avoid heavy exercise for a few hours after the procedure.

Risks

Risks include scarring and the blood vessels becoming noticeable again.

4. Halo Laser

Halo gives you brighter fresher looking skin, with little improvement in lines (wrinkles). It is best for those wanting a balanced rejuvenation changes with a quick recovery.

How It Works

This is the newest laser we offer. It is becoming very popular nationwide. It combines removal of some of the cells of the skin with creating tiny areas of heat. This allows skin rejuvenation with limited downtime. It can be done in one session or repeated if needed or requested.

What It Does Not Do

This laser will not help you with deep wrinkles (lines), sun spots or skin laxity (loose skin). The laser works best for those with early signs of aging.

Risks

These include healing with more or less pigment, persistent redness, scarring, and infection.

About the Procedure

You need to arrive 45 minutes before the procedure to apply numbing cream. The procedure will take 15-30 minutes based on the depth of the laser. You can bring headphones with you to listen to your favorite music or simply for noise reduction.

Getting Ready

Use sunblock and avoid sun exposure for 2 weeks before the procedure.

Recovery

For the first few hours your skin will feel very warm. You can apply ice to the lasered area during this time. There will be little pain. Skin is usually healed in 5 days.

You will need to take 2 days off from work and social activities. It is possible to get

back to work in 3 days with the use of special make up. Use sunblock and avoid sun exposure for 4 weeks after the procedure. You will be given antibiotics and antivirals.

5. Skin Tightening Laser (Skintyte™)

This is used for tightening loose skin (laxity). This laser works best with early and mild skin laxity. It is most helpful in the neck.

How It Works

The laser generates heat, which leads to skin tightening. In most cases 5 sessions are needed, spaced 4-8 weeks apart.

About the Procedure

The procedure takes around 10 minutes. We place cold gel on the area being treated, and special goggles on the eyes. The laser itself is not painful but will create warmth (heat) in the area being treated.

Getting Ready

Use sunblock and avoid sun exposure for 2 weeks before the procedure.

Recovery

Most patients get back to work and regular life right after the procedure. Some patients will have redness and minor swelling that is often gone within a few hours. Use sunblock and avoid sun exposure for 4 weeks after the procedure.

What It Does Not Do

It will not help you with wrinkles (lines), sunspots or more advanced skin laxity.

Risks

The most common problem is not enough correction of the skin laxity. Other complications are rare.

6. Scar Laser (Profractional Laser)

This is used to improve the appearance of scars.

How It Works

It works by creating tiny little tunnels in the scar. As the tunnels heal, the collagen pattern within the scar improves and the look of the scar improves. It can be done in one session or repeated if needed or requested.

About the Procedure

You should arrive 45 minutes before the procedure to apply numbing cream. The procedure takes 1-15 minutes based on the length of the scar. You can bring headphones with you to listen to your favorite music or simply for noise reduction.

Recovery

There will be some bleeding and pain at the area being treated. Most patients heal within 5 days. You might be given antibiotics and antivirals after the procedure. There will be little pain after the procedure.

Risks

These include healing with more or less pigment, persistent redness, scarring, and infection.

Other Things to Know

- You can have Botox[®] and fillers at the same time as most lasers.
- Thread lifts are an excellent add-on to lasers. They allow lifting (correction) of the cheeks and jowls.
- These lasers are often done with a facelift as well as other procedures in other body parts.
- In most patients, lasers will not give the same results as a facelift.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 3/2024 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#8170