

New England Dermatology & Laser Center
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PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR LASER HAIR REMOVAL

PRETREATMENT INSTRUCTIONS:

- ❑ The ideal candidate for treatment is one who has dark hair and light skin; a contrast is necessary for optimal results.
- ❑ Light colored hair (white, gray, blonde) does not typically respond to laser treatment.
- ❑ Avoid sun exposure before treatment and wear appropriate sunblock. Tanned and dark skinned patients are not ideal candidates for this procedure and have a higher risk for complications. **YOUR LASER TREATMENT MAY NEED TO BE CANCELLED IF YOU ARE SUNTANNED IN THE AREA TO BE TREATED. IF YOU DO HAVE A SUNTAN, PLEASE SCHEDULE ANY TREATMENTS AFTER THE TAN HAS FADED COMPLETELY.**
- ❑ Do not use tanning creams or self-tanners for one week prior to treatment.
- ❑ Hair must be visible for treatment to be effective. Avoid bleaching, plucking or waxing hair for 4-6 weeks prior to treatment. A short stubble of hair which can barely be felt is preferable to longer hair. Shaving or cutting the hair short a day or two before treatment will achieve this effect.
- ❑ If your skin has a tendency to turn dark in areas of minor cuts, abrasions or scars, please talk to your doctor as you may have an increased risk of skin darkening with laser treatment.
- ❑ Occasionally, patients who are prone to developing cold sores around the mouth may develop cold sores following laser treatment in this area. Individuals who are so prone should take an antiviral medication before treatment. If you have had a history of cold sores, please let your physician know at least one week PRIOR TO your treatment so that an antiviral medication can be prescribed. Also, please reschedule your appointment if you have a visible cold sore or bacterial infection in the area to be treated as the area must be completely healed before treatment.
- ❑ This procedure can be uncomfortable for some patients. The use of a topical anesthetic is optional. If you wish to apply a topical anesthetic at home, please notify your physician for a prescription. If you would like the topical anesthetic applied in the office, please notify our office and **COME TO THE OFFICE ONE HOUR BEFORE YOUR SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT** to have the topical anesthetic applied.
- ❑ If you have taken or are currently taking Accutane, Sotret, or any other isotretinoin medication, you must be off this medication for at least **TWELVE MONTHS** before laser treatment to minimize the risk of poor wound healing and permanent scarring.
- ❑ If you are pregnant, breast-feeding, or trying to become pregnant, please alert your physician as you are not a candidate at this time.
- ❑ If you are unable to keep your appointment, please call 413-733-9600 to cancel or reschedule. Patients will be charged for any missed appointment that is not cancelled at least 24 hours in advance.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE PROCEDURE:

- The skin is cleaned and the hair is shaved/cut prior to treatment.
- A popping sound occurs with each pulse of light delivered and the skin feels as though it has been snapped by a rubber band. Although not totally painless, many patients tolerate the procedure very well without any local anesthesia. Patients do have a tendency to flinch with the first pulse, more from being startled than from pain. Subsequent pulses are tolerated more easily.
- Most treatments take less than 15 minutes.

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- When treating the upper lip, the teeth may be protected with moist white gauze or by placing the tongue between the lips and gums. This also supports the lip during treatment, allowing a surface to push against.
- Safety considerations are important during the laser procedure. Protective eye wear will be worn by the patient and all personnel in the operative suite during treatment.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER YOUR TREATMENT:

- Immediately after treatment, there may be redness, swelling, and a sunburn-like sensation in the treated areas, lasting up to 24 hours. There is usually associated swelling which can last 2 hours or longer. The treated area may feel like a sunburn for several hours after treatment. The application of cool water compresses and/or a soothing skin care product such as aloe vera gel or over-the-counter hydrocortisone 1% cream may be applied following treatment if desired.

POST-TREATMENT INSTRUCTIONS:

- ❑ Avoid picking or scratching the treated skin.
- ❑ Do not use any other hair removal treatment products or similar treatments (waxing, electrolysis, or tweezing) that will disturb the hair follicle in the treatment area for 4-6 weeks after the laser treatment is performed. Shaving is the preferred method. Vaniqua cream applied to reduce hair regrowth is permissible.
- ❑ After the underarms are treated, you may wish to use a powder instead of a deodorant for 24 hours to reduce skin irritation.
- ❑ **AVOID DIRECT SUNLIGHT** and wear sun protective clothing to cover the treated area (i.e. a wide brimmed hat for treatment on the face). This will reduce your risk of hyperpigmentation (skin darkening) and other complications. Use a sunscreen that offers UVA and UVB protection with an SPF of at least 30 on the treated areas that are not covered by clothing. Look for a sunscreen that contains zinc oxide, titanium dioxide, mexoryl, or parsol 1789.
- ❑ **Scrubs, toners, glycolic acid, and retinoids:** Your skin may be sensitive for a week or so after treatment, so do not use products that will cause irritation during this time. Do not use abrasive scrubs, toners, or products that contain glycolic acids or Retin-A on the treated area until any sensitive skin symptoms subside.
- ❑ **Makeup:** If makeup is applied, do not use makeup remover or cleanse harshly as this may injure the treated area. You may resume your normal skin care regimen when your skin no longer feels irritated.
- ❑ **Bathing:** There are no restrictions on bathing except to treat the skin gently, as if you had a sunburn, for the first 24 hours.
- ❑ In approximately 10-21 days after the treatment, the hair follicles will shed their surface hair. This is NOT new hair growth. This may look like new hair growth, but these hairs can be washed away with a wet cloth or Loofa sponge.
- ❑ Laser hair removal is usually performed in a series of multiple treatments for best results. Partial regrowth of hair occurs at different rates on different areas of the body and it is expected that periodic re-treatment will be necessary to maintain results. Treatments are usually spaced apart at least 4-6 weeks or more.

COST AND PAYMENT POLICY: Since laser hair removal is considered cosmetic, you will be responsible for the cost of treatment. Full payment is due at the time of service. Unfortunately, credit cannot be extended. Please discuss the estimated cost of treatments prior to undergoing the procedure. Your treatment may be more or less than the estimate depending on the areas treated. If you have any questions, please make sure they are answered to your satisfaction.

We are pleased that you have chosen New England Dermatology & Laser Center for your skin care and we appreciate your confidence in us. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your treatment, please call us at (413) 733-9600.