

Laser Skin Rejuvenation

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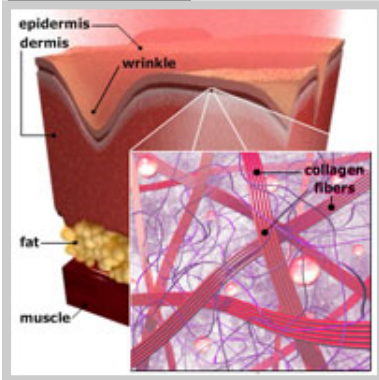
Laser Resurfacing Introduction

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Laser Resurfacing Treatment Areas

Laser resurfacing can be used successfully to reduce the appearance of facial lines such as forehead lines, crow's feet, smile lines, and vertical lines around the mouth, as well as other inconsistencies on the face. Furthermore, laser resurfacing is often used in conjunction with other procedures such as eyelid surgery or a facelift.



How Does Laser Resurfacing Work?

During laser resurfacing, a high-energy beam of light is used to heat the dermis, which primarily stimulates the formation of new collagen, a protein responsible for providing structure and support in the dermis. The intense heat from the laser also causes the outer layers of the epidermis to peel away. As your skin heals following treatment, new skin cells develop, giving the face a smoother, firmer, more youthful appearance.

It is important to realize that laser resurfacing should not be considered as a substitute for a facelift nor can it be used to remove excess facial skin. Laser resurfacing can be performed on individuals of any age; however it is most successful on individuals with healthy skin and fair complexions.



Procedure Preparation

The length of a laser resurfacing procedure varies depending on the extent of treatment, usually lasting one to two hours. You may be given eyewear that will protect your eyes from the intense light produced by the laser.

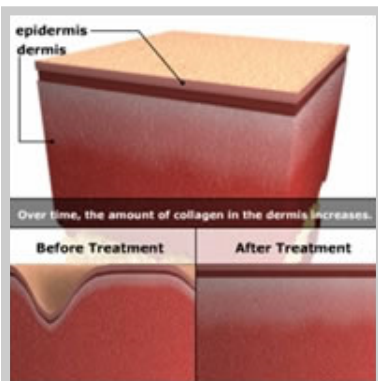
Prior to the start of your laser resurfacing procedure, the treatment area will be thoroughly cleansed. Typically, a topical or local anesthetic will be administered. A sedative may also be provided to help you stay relaxed and comfortable for your procedure. General anesthesia may be administered if the laser treatment will be extensive or if it is being performed in conjunction with another procedure.



Laser Resurfacing Technique

Although there are several different types of lasers used in laser resurfacing, the most commonly used laser is known as a pulsed CO₂ laser. Pulsed CO₂ lasers work by producing short bursts of intense light. The beam of light is emitted from a small wand-like device that the physician waves across the treatment area.

CO₂ pulsed lasers are accurate and precise, which gives the physician control over how deep the laser beam penetrates into the skin. This allows the physician to customize the treatment based on the extent of wrinkle formation or skin damage in the area.



Laser Resurfacing Treatment

As the physician guides the wand over the face, the high-energy laser damages the outermost layers of the epidermis, which peel away as you heal. During this process, you will most likely feel a slight burning sensation. When switched to low-power, the laser heats the dermis, which stimulates new collagen production over time. This new collagen will improve the structure and elasticity of the skin.

Deeper wrinkles or scars may require multiple passes over the treatment area, whereas fine lines and other minimal skin irregularities may be treated with as few as a single pass. Additionally, some newer CO₂ lasers emit lower energy which can improve the appearance of the skin without affecting the dermis, and thereby shortening recovery time.



What to Expect in the Short Term

Following the laser resurfacing procedure, an ointment may be applied to your face to protect it during the initial healing stages. In this case, you will need to continue to apply the ointment for approximately one week. You can begin to apply cosmetics in approximately ten to fourteen days following the procedure.



What to Expect in the Long Term

You may experience minor pain and swelling for the first few days following the procedure. Your face may have a fine crust and a reddish appearance that lasts for approximately two to three weeks, respectively. It is important to realize that the redness indicates healing is taking place and new collagen is being formed in the dermis. While the majority of the redness will begin to fade in approximately one month, the healing process is gradual. Therefore, it is not uncommon for your skin to be slightly red for up to three or four months. While your skin remains red, it is important to protect it from sun exposure by using sunscreen with SPF 15 or greater.



Laser Resurfacing Results

You will most likely notice an improvement in your skin tone and texture as the redness begins to fade, but the final results from your procedure may not be evident for several months. It is important to realize that laser resurfacing does not prevent your skin from continuing to age, and new lines and wrinkles will slowly form over time. However, depending on factors such as the type of treatment, your skin type, and the condition being treated, the results from a laser resurfacing procedure may last for several years.