

LASER RESURFACING

Notes for guidance

None of us want to start looking our age before we need to - we want to continue looking as young as we feel for as long as possible. Unfortunately, our faces often make that goal difficult to obtain. The tiny wrinkles that develop around our eyes and mouths, for example, are early signals of aging and can wreck havoc with our self-confidence. Correcting wrinkles and similar facial problems is the goal of the many patients who have laser resurfacing done every year.

Is Laser Resurfacing right for you?

Laser Resurfacing may be a popular option, but it is not the right choice for everyone. Other treatments, such as chemical peels, have been around a lot longer. However, if you have light wrinkles appearing in specific areas of your face or if you have scarring or discolorations in certain spots, then you may benefit from the laser's ability to hone in on that area with precision and correct the problems.

What is Laser Resurfacing?

With laser resurfacing, a carbon dioxide laser is used to destroy the upper layers of your skin so that you'll be left with softer, smoother, and tighter skin layers previously unexposed. As with any laser, this piece of equipment can work on a very targeted area successfully so you can limit your treatment to just the areas where it is necessary. Laser resurfacing is sometimes combined with other cosmetic procedures, such as eyelid surgery.

The majority of laser resurfacing procedures are completed on an outpatient basis with the treatment usually being done right in the physician's office. Because laser resurfacing can be painful, your physician will numb your face with a local anesthetic and will also give you a sedative to keep you calm. Some patients who are having major work done to their faces or bodies may need to have a general anesthetic so they sleep through the entire process.

Are you a good candidate?

Laser resurfacing has been a great option for many people, but it may not be the right choice for you. For example, certain skin tones may want to avoid the procedure because it is more likely to change the pigmentation of their skins. This is usually true of people with olive, brown, or black skin.

Other reasons you would not be a good candidate include taking certain types of medications which might also increase your risk of complications. Obviously, if you know that your skin tends to scar excessively or if you have a current skin infection, then you would want to avoid laser resurfacing. You are also a good candidate if you have not recently undergone similar procedures, such as chemical peels, and if you are a non-smoking. Smoking interferes with the proper healing of the skin. Additionally, if you are prone to scarring even after a small procedure, then your physician will advise you if this type of treatment is right for you.

Laser resurfacing is also a more desirable choice for individuals who are happy with most of their facial features, except for a few stubborn areas which can be treated without interfering with any of the surrounding areas.

How is the procedure performed?

Before you decide to have the procedure done, you will want to have a consultation where you also discuss your physician's experience with the procedure. Today, many cosmetic surgeons offer the service but may not be truly knowledgeable or capable of doing a good job. You want to feel comfortable with your physician's know-how before you begin the procedure.

When the laser resurfacing does begin, your physician will simply move the concentrated beam from the laser across the targeted areas of your face several times. Each pass is killing part of your skin. When the physician reaches the level of skin where your particular skin flaws are no longer noticeable, he will stop or will move on to the next targeted area to repeat the procedure.

Once all of the desired areas have been treated, your physician will either coat the areas with a special cream or with bandages to protect the delicate skin that has now been exposed.

Depending on your physician's experience and on how much resurfacing is being done, the procedure can take anywhere from 20 to 90 minutes to complete.

How long will it take before I feel normal again?

Initially after the procedure you will feel some pain and your face will be somewhat swollen, and your physician may encourage you to apply ice to your face regularly to help with both of these problems. Your skin is also likely to be very pink or red. Again, your physician will be able to give you a prescription that will eliminate the discoloration faster.

The swelling and pain will probably go away within a week; however, your face will continue to be discolored for more than two weeks. Some patients still have mild discoloration a full six months after the resurfacing was done.

Although you can return to your job and normal routine after the first day or two, you'll need to always apply a good sunscreen to your face to protect your skin.

Are there any risks?

As with any procedure, there are potential risks to be considered. With laser resurfacing, one concern is complications from the anesthetic. Of course, this is true any time you receive anesthesia for any procedure.

Other risks include the possibility of permanent changes to the color of your face, known as hypopigmentation and hyperpigmentation. If you fail to follow your physicians' after-care advice you could also end up with a skin infection or other preventable problems.

Will I be happy with my results?

Once the bandages are removed and you're back to your old routine, you'll soon be able to get a good image of how you now look. Remember the discoloration is normal and should disappear after just a couple of months. Thankfully, you don't have to wait that long to be pleased with the results of the procedure.

Further Information

This brochure has been prepared to give a basic understanding of the procedure before a consultation takes place, and to cover many of the questions frequently asked about this type of cosmetic surgery. Final decisions should not be made until an individual assessment has taken place with the surgeon.

There is no obligation on the part of the patient to undergo surgery by attending for consultation.

If you have any further questions or would like to arrange a consultation please fill in the online form on our website at www.surgeryone.co.uk. All enquiries are always treated confidentially.