

## **Post-operative Instructions for Laser Resurfacing**

The first few days after laser resurfacing can be very unsettling if you're not sure what to expect. By letting you know the normal post-operative course, and how to take care of yourself properly, you should feel more confident that you're doing everything you can do to help in your healing. Our goal is to make your recovery as safe and comfortable as possible. Rest assured that with each passing day, you will feel better and your symptoms will subside. You can speed your recovery by following our directions carefully.

The first few days after laser resurfacing, most people experience a moderate amount of discomfort in the area treated, similar to what you would experience if you had a significant sunburn. The treated areas not covered by a dressing will initially become crusted and will seep clear or yellowish fluid. There will be moderate swelling as well.

If you had eyelid resurfacing, your lids will be puffy, and your eyes will be scratchy and watery. Your vision will likely be blurred for a couple of days. Do not expect to be able to drive or do much reading for several days.

The crusting and oozing of the skin will usually subside by day 7 or 8, at which point there may continue to be some dry flaking. The skin will continue to appear red for several more weeks or in some cases months (depending upon your skin tone and depth of treatment).

**In general, camouflage makeup may be worn at approximately 10 days after your laser procedure, but should be approved by Dr. Stern and our aesthetician before trying to do so. Wearing makeup prematurely may irritate your skin and set back your recovery.**

- **Dressing-** If you had full face laser resurfacing, your face will be covered by a special, clear silicone dressing. This dressing should remain in place for approximately 3 days. Though it may feel confining, **it is important that you leave this dressing in place as directed.** It will dramatically speed up the healing process of your facial skin, as well as reduce post-operative pain and discomfort.
- **Ointment-** It is essential that you keep any exposed, laser-treated areas well lubricated with Aquaphor. Excessive drying may delay healing or lead to scarring. Over the first 48 hours, apply the ointment every two hours while awake. This may be tapered by the fourth day to every four hours. **Be sure to wash your hands with soap and water before applying any ointment, or touching your face during the first ten days. Failure to do so may lead to a serious infection of your facial skin, which in turn may cause scarring.** It is also important not to pick at or remove any crusted areas of skin. These will peel off naturally over the first week.
- **Cold Compresses-** Cold compresses will soothe the area and reduce swelling. You may use a cold gel mask, or a small bag of frozen peas or corn—whatever you find easiest. Apply the cold compresses for 15-20 minutes every hour for the first 48 hrs, then reduce as desired.

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- **Showering & washing-** It is OK to gently wash your face with a mild soap (we recommend *Dove or Cetaphil*) after your facial dressing is removed, but as noted above, be careful not to pick at any crusted areas. After washing gently blot the area dry with a clean washcloth and then apply Aquaphor liberally to the area.
- **Eyedrops-** If you were prescribed or given any drops after surgery, be sure to use them as directed to lubricate your eyes.
- **Contacts-** Contacts will not be able to be worn for about 10 days as per Dr. Stern
- **Medication-** It is very important that you take the antibiotics and anti-viral medications as prescribed. Use the pain medication and sleeping pill as needed. Remember that most prescription pain medications will cause nausea if taken on an empty stomach, so be sure to have at least a light snack prior to taking your medicine. If you are very nauseated to the point of vomiting, please call the office and we will prescribe anti-nausea medication.
- **Activity & Diet-** The most important things to remember are drink a lot of fluids the first several days, and don't try to do too much too soon. Sitting up or resting with your head elevated on an extra pillow helps reduce swelling.
- **Sun exposure-** Your skin will be more sensitive to the sun for at least six months following laser treatment. It is important to wear sun block with SPF 30 or higher when spending significant time in the sun following laser. A hat or cap and sunglasses are recommended as well. Failure to protect your skin from the sun may cause abnormal pigmentation of the skin.

If you have any questions or concerns, call us at the office at **(425) 455-9100**.

If you have any after-hours **emergency**, you may reach Dr. Stern directly by calling his cell phone at **425- 628-7720**.

**These instructions have been explained to me. I understand it is my responsibility to follow them, and have been given a copy for reference.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patient's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patient's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time