

## Laser Resurfacing

All resurfacing treatments work essentially the same way. Laser resurfacing is a new method being used by plastic surgeons to remove damaged skin. Laser resurfacing is performed using a beam of laser energy, which vaporizes the upper layers of damaged skin at specific and controlled levels of penetration. The carbon dioxide laser emits an invisible infrared beam at a 10,600-nm wavelength, targeting both intracellular and extracellular water. The removal of the upper layer of skin exposes the fresher, healthier-looking underlying skin.

Laser resurfacing is most commonly performed under local anesthesia with sedation, especially when it's used to treat localized areas of the face. You'll be awake but relaxed, and will feel minimal discomfort. For more extensive resurfacing, your surgeon may prefer to use general anesthesia, in which case you'll sleep through the procedure.

Laser resurfacing is a relatively quick procedure. The length of the procedure usually takes anywhere from a few minutes to one and a half hours, depending on how large of an area is involved.

Laser resurfacing is normally performed under Light Sleep sedation or Local with a mild intravenous sedation (Valium, Versed, etc.) often with the use of general anesthetic.

For superficial or medium resurfacing, the laser can be limited to the epidermis and papillary dermis, usually in one pass. When the imperfections are especially deep, your surgeon may recommend that the resurfacing be performed in two or more stages. For deeper resurfacing, the upper levels of the reticular dermis can also be removed. Varied penetration allows treatment of specific spots, wrinkles, uneven pigment, and scars.

During the procedure, the activated laser is carefully passed back and forth over the skin until the surgeon reaches the level that will make the wrinkle or scar less visible. Very skilled surgeons know to make several light passes resulting in a blended area where the laser did not pass. This way there is no obvious line of demarcation.

When the skin resurfacing procedure is over, your surgeon may choose to treat the resurfaced skin with applications of protective creams or ointments until healing is complete. Surgeons will normally cover the patient's face with either a thin film of Bacitracin or antibiotic burn cream like Silvadine. Some surgeons use a second synthetic breathable skin to protect the newly surfaced tissue during its healing process. Some surgeons choose to apply a bandage over the treated areas that will cover and protect the healing skin for the first five to ten days.

Laser resurfacing a relatively easy procedure when performed by a skilled and experienced surgeon. The physical changes that occur to laser-treated skin are essentially identical to those that occur with either dermabrasion or chemical peel.

## Your Consultation

Your physician consultation is very important, because it is the moment when you can discuss your medical issues face-to-face with your doctor. If you are traveling from overseas, this will be the first time you meet with your doctor so it critical that he/she understands:

- Your medical needs
- Your expectations

- Your medical history

Most people have a good idea of what the procedure or outcome they want ("I want smaller breasts"), and the physician's responsibility is to listen and then explain what can be done, the procedures or techniques to achieve your objectives, and the risks and costs involved.

You will have a lot of questions to ask, so preparation is key to make the most of your consultation. We suggest that you:

- Write your questions down to make sure you remember them
- Come with your medical history/survey already completed
- Bring any photos or visual aids that will help explain what it is you want or expect from treatment

**Please note that this information should be used only as a guide to your treatment. All specifics will be discussed with your Physician at your consultation.**