

Q&A: Laser Skin Treatments

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Q: WHAT SKIN CONDITIONS CAN BE TREATED WITH LASERS?

Laser technology has come a long way, and different types of lasers now can be used effectively to treat a variety of conditions, including:

- Sun damage
- Brown spots
- Rosacea
- Broken blood vessels
- Wrinkles and acne scars (“skin resurfacing”)
- Certain benign lesions

We also use lasers for hair removal.

Q: HOW MANY TREATMENTS DO PATIENTS USUALLY NEED?

Most people need between three and six treatments, depending on how severe the skin condition is and how well it responds to the laser.

Q: IS THE PROCEDURE PAINFUL?

It varies — some people say it stings a little, but most tolerate it well.

Q: HOW LONG DO THE EFFECTS LAST?

They should last a few years before touch-up treatments are needed.

Q: WHAT’S THE RECOVERY LIKE?

Depending on the treatment, you might have some minor redness, swelling, tenderness and crusting that resolves within hours to a week.

Q: DO I NEED A CONSULT FIRST?

Yes, you should always have a cosmetic consultation before having any kind of laser treatment on your skin. The consultation is

important to make sure the treatment is safe for you and right for your goals. There is a fee for the consultation, but it’s applied to your first service.

Q: WHO SHOULD NOT GET LASER TREATMENT?

It’s not recommended for:

- People with active infections
- Those with certain autoimmune conditions
- People who have photosensitivity
- Kids ages 10 and under, barring special circumstances.

Q: ARE THESE SERVICES COVERED BY INSURANCE?

No — most plans consider these types of treatments to be cosmetic rather than medically necessary, so they aren’t covered. Patients usually pay at the time of service. However, you can try to petition your insurance after the fact or use your flexible spending account (FSA).

Q: WHAT’S THE BEST TIME OF YEAR TO GET LASER TREATMENTS?

Winter, when your skin has the least exposure to the sun, is an especially good time for it. Some laser treatments can’t be given in the summer. If you have more questions, we’d be happy to help.

AMANDA PICKERT, M.D., AND JANELLE ROHRBACK, M.D., FAAD, PROVIDE LASER TREATMENTS AND OTHER DERMATOLOGY SERVICES AT THE PORTLAND CLINIC - BEAVERTON. FOR A CONSULTATION, CALL 503-646-0161 EXT. 6119 OR 6045.