

Skin Care Following Laser Treatment

1. Keep the site clean. Gentle cleansing twice a day with a mild soap is helpful.
2. If blisters or scabs occur after treatment, avoid cosmetics on or near the treated area until they are cleared.
3. Strictly avoid sun exposure to the treated sites by keeping the area covered with clothing or with a dressing (eg. a bandaid).
4. Use Polysporin ointment (or Bactroban or Bacitracin ointment) twice a day for 4-7 days. You may want to cover the area with a loose sterile, non-stick dressing such as Telfa.
5. Do not attempt to remove scabs, scaling or crust by force since this can cause scarring. They will fall off naturally within 1-2 weeks.
6. If you notice a lot of facial swelling, sleep with your head and shoulders raised on a pillow to help decrease the swelling. Cold compresses will also help reduce the swelling.
7. For discomfort Tylenol should be adequate.
8. If any problems such as pain, bleeding, or infection (redness or drainage after 48 hours) occur, please call the Lions Laser Skin Centre at 875-4682 or 875-5151. For emergencies after office hours and on weekends, please contact your Laser Surgeon (phone number listed in the White Pages).

The Lions Laser Skin Centre is supported by
The B.C. Lions Society for Children with Disabilities,
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Q Switched Lasers

For Pigmented Skin Lesions and Tattoos

Patient's Guide



Lions Laser Skin Centre
UBC & VGH Department of
Dermatology and Skin Science

835 West 10th Avenue
Vancouver BC V5Z 4E8
Tel: 604- 875-4682
www.SkinCareCentre.ca

Q Switched Lasers

Q- switched Lasers deliver precise intense pulses of light that are used to remove excessive melanin (brown) pigment in benign skin lesions such as age or “liver” spots, “sun” spots, freckles, and certain birthmarks (café au lait and nevus of Ota). Some of these lasers may also be used to lighten or remove tattoos.

Before your Treatment

At your first visit, we will discuss the size, type, and color of your pigmented lesion or tattoo, and the probable results of treatment. Many benign pigmented lesions can be effectively removed. In general, amateur tattoos (done with India ink) respond very well to treatment, while professional tattoos can be more difficult to treat. You will be advised during your consultation how well your particular lesion is likely to respond to treatment. If you agree to proceed with treatment, you will be required to sign a consent form, as with most medical procedures. The area will be photographed for your medical record. It is recommended that you do not expose your tattoo or pigmented lesion to the sun for several months before and throughout your treatment. A suntan will prevent the laser light from reaching the pigment to be treated.

During your Treatment

If necessary, the hair over the tattoo or pigmented lesion will be shaved. The laser light is directed at the skin using a flexible handpiece held by the physician. Each laser pulse exposes an area less than the size of a pencil eraser and feels like an elastic band that is being snapped against your skin. A series of laser pulses will be required to complete the treatment. Local anaesthesia is available but most patients usually do not find it necessary. During treatment, everyone in the room must wear protective eye wear. A single treatment session may last between 15 to 30 minutes. The length of each treatment session depends on the size of the area to be treated.

After Your Treatment

Immediately after the treatment, the treated area turns white and swells slightly. Pinpoint bleeding and bruising may occur in some treatment sites. The white color fades in about 20 minutes. Over the next several days, blisters may form and then a scab or a crust may follow. The skin usually returns to normal after 10-14 days. You must apply an antibiotic ointment to the treated area twice a day to promote healing.

Follow-up

If necessary, you will receive treatment about once every two months. Benign pigmented lesions take anywhere from one to six sessions depending on the nature of the lesion. For an amateur tattoo, on average two to four sessions are required for each treated area. Professional tattoos usually require six or more treatments for each area. The side effects of treatment include a change in the color of the treated skin to being either lighter or darker than normal. In general, scarring does not occur with Q- switched lasers, but it does remain a small risk (up to 1% chance).

Cost

The fees are based on the size of the treated area, and will be estimated at your initial consultation. The fees quoted will be per treatment session as it is difficult to predict the exact number of treatment sessions needed. Neither tattoo nor pigmented lesion removal for cosmetic purposes are covered by the British Columbia Medical Services Plan. The cost of treatment is your personal responsibility and may be paid by cash, VISA, or Mastercard.

Questions

We will be happy to answer any questions during your consultation visit.