

LASER DERMABRASION - SKIN RESURFACING

Technological advances are made everyday within the facial plastics and cosmetic surgery field. The latest of these advances includes the use of lasers in the treatment of facial wrinkling, blemishes and discoloration. Laser dermabrasion/Laserabrasion or Skin Resurfacing, as it can be called, is performed on the skin of the face and neck. This process does not replace the traditional face lift procedure, but it can make deep wrinkling less noticeable, eliminate fine lines and smooth the appearance of acne or other scarring of the face.

The laser works by vaporizing skin-tissue with a beam of light. A concentrated beam is absorbed by and removes the water in skin cells. This action causes the cells to dry up and die gently. The treated area is then wiped with moist gauze to remove the dead skin cells. This process exposes underlying tissue allowing a smoother and more youthful layer to develop, one with diminished and softened wrinkling. Exposure time to the laser is electronically controlled and allows for controlled removal of the top layers of skin without residual damage to adjacent underlying tissue thus minimizing skin damage and maximizing the healing and rejuvenation process.

Laser dermabrasion can be performed as a full-face procedure or on selected areas of the face and neck. The areas around the eyes and mouth are commonly done to reduce the fine wrinkles that contribute to the appearance of the aging face. All of these procedures are done in the office setting and require a minimal amount of preparation time.

The process is not particularly painful as a local anesthetic is used on the sensitive area(s). After the procedure, the area(s) treated is reddened and slightly swollen. The acute discoloration and swelling of the skin persists in varying degrees for 7 to 10 days, diminishing with each day that passes. (A pink to reddish hue can last anywhere from 2 weeks to several months depending upon the individual - a sunscreen product must be worn to minimize damage to the newly developing skin.) An "oozing" or crusting will develop but subside around the 5th to 7th day. Immediately following and during the entire healing process, ointment and/or a dressing is used over the area(s) to promote healing and to prevent infection and scabbing. This ointment is applied 3 to 4 times daily. Keeping the area(s) moist during the healing process is important in producing the most favorable outcome; a skin tone this is smoother, with fine lines that have disappeared and deeper ones that are less noticeable.

AFTER SURGERY

POST OP DAYS 1 - 2

You may feel discomfort for the first 24 hour period and may need some non-aspirin pain medication. Avoid anti-inflammatory medications (i.e. ibuprofen, Advil, Alieve, etc.) and preparations with aspirin, as they can cause bleeding problems. Take pain medications only as directed.

Days 1 - 3 are characterized by:

- maximum swelling
- oozing of the skin surface
- skin appears smooth and uniformly reddened
- A layer of ointment is used to cover exposed areas
- take all medications as prescribed

The amount of oozing during these first few days can make it difficult for the dressing to adhere to your new skin. We encourage you to keep the dressing pressed in contact with your face. Any area that have been treated, but does not have a dressing due to excess movement of facial muscles, will need to have ointment placed on the area(s) 3 to 4 times daily. You will be seen in the office on the first and second post operative days. Do not allow area(s) to dry out or scab.

It is normal to have some oozing and crusting, however an increase in swelling, development of a fever of 101° or more, and any excessive bleeding from the area(s) should be reported Dr. Craig.

POST OP DAYS 3 - 6

Days 3 - 6 are characterized by:

- swelling gradually diminishes
- moderate to minimum oozing
- epithelization begins and skin takes on a blotchy appearance
- finish all medications prescribed
- continue use of ointment and skin care products as advised

During this period the area may itch. Do not scratch.

Continue to the use ointment as discussed above, only now the ointment must be applied to the whole area treated, 3 to 4 times daily. Frequent washing with cool to tepid water (splashing, bathing - not rubbing). Showering is allowed but you should not scrub the area until completely healed.

POST OP DAYS 7 - 10

Days 7 - 10 are characterized by:

- oozing is scant or not present as epithelialization advances
- frequent washing done by patient
- period of exfoliation and sloughing of debris

With this washing, your face will undergo a 24-48 hour period of exfoliation and sloughing of any remaining debris on the face.

POST OP DAYS 11 - 14

As soon as the exfoliation period is complete, you can resume your skin care routine including the application of makeup.