



# MERIDIAN AESTHETICS AND WELLNESS

Carlo E. Gopez, M.D.      Helene Lee, M.D.  
115 North Bridge Street, Elkton, MD 21921  
(Tel) 410-398-3041      (Fax) 410-392-6853

## Pre and Post Treatment Instructions for Laser Hair Reduction

Lasers are a form of light energy which target pigmented cells. With hair, the target is a pigment called melanin. The darker the hair the more melanin is present and the better response you going to get from laser hair removal. When a laser is directed on the unwanted hair, the laser energy is absorbed by the hair which creates a heat that destroys the hair root without causing damage to the skin. The light is quickly passed over the area, treating many hairs at one time.

The growth cycle of a hair consists of three stages:

- 1. Anagen (growing) Stage:** the growing period of a hair follicle. The anagen stage for the hair follicles in the scalp typically lasts about 3 to 5 years.
- 2. Catagen (intermediate) Stage:** at the end of the growth period, hair follicles prepare themselves for the resting phase. This transition period of a hair follicle from growth to rest is called the catagen stage. This stage of the hair growth cycle usually lasts about 1 to 2 weeks. During the catagen phase the deeper portions of the hair follicles start to collapse.
- 3. Telogen (resting or shedding) Stage:** this is the resting period of a hair follicle. It is usually 3 to 4 months in length and at the end of this period older hairs that have finished their life will fall out and newer hairs will begin to grow.

### Pre Treatment Instructions:

**Do not pluck, wax or have electrolysis for at least 6-8 weeks before the laser treatment** — these techniques pull the out the hair shaft from the follicle. Shaving and depilatory creams are allowed because they leave the hair shaft in the follicle. Since the laser targets the pigment in the hair shaft, it is essential that the hair shaft be present at the time of treatment.

**Avoid sun exposure (apply sunscreen daily and do not tan at all – including self-tanner) for 4 to 6 weeks before and after treatments.** Do not use any retinol products, tretinoin products, or exfoliants on the area to be treated for one week. Avoid Accutane (isotretinoin) for 6 months prior. Let your doctor know if you have a history of hyperpigmentation.

Please notify us if you have a history of **fever blisters or cold sores**. You may need a prescription for a prophylactic antiviral therapy to prevent a flare up. If you have a current prescription, Valtrex 500mg should be taken by mouth twice daily on the day before, the day of, and the day after your treatment. You must notify us if you have had any cosmetic **tattooing** on or near the area to be treated. **Do not expect an ideal response if you have blond, red, gray or white hair.** Using dye to darken the hair does not improve the response. Photosensitizing medications including doxycycline and minocycline should be discontinued 3 days prior to the treatment.

### On the day of your appointment:

**Shave before your treatment.** It's important that the hair shaft (with pigment) be present in the follicle below the skin, but the hair NOT be present above the skin. If the external hair shaft is present, the laser will burn it and possibly burn your skin. If you do not want to shave, you may use a depilatory cream (Nair or Veet). Do not wear deodorant in the area being treated. If applicable, dress so that you may modestly expose the treatment area. Remove all jewelry, piercings, watches as these may heat up.

Post treatment:

Expect to see some swelling and redness around the hair follicles after your laser treatments. This is an indication of appropriate treatment. The sunburned feeling and swelling usually last 1-3 hours. Applying ice will give relief and reduce the swelling duration. A topical cortisone cream can also be used. The redness may last a few days, but can be covered up by applying makeup. Your skin will be fragile for 2-3 days. Use gentle, do not rub the skin and avoid hot water during this time. You may shave the area 24 hours after treatment if the skin is no longer sensitive. Do not use deodorant for 24 hours post laser hair reduction of the underarms. Do not use any retinoids, tretinoin, alpha or beta hydroxy products, vitamin C products, chemical peels, scrub, exfoliate, or a facial brush on the area treated for one week. We recommend you use a moisturizer. Makeup can be applied immediately (if the skin is not broken). Avoid the sun and use sun block. Avoid excessive heat or friction to the treated area (heavy exercise, saunas, swimming pools with chemicals) for one week.

**Do expect that it will take several treatments to achieve the desired results.** Laser treatments are only effective in the anagen phase of the hair growth cycle. Some of the hair in the treated area may be in different phases of the growth cycle and will need to be treated once they get to the anagen stage.

Scheduling:

**Face:** every 4 weeks

**Underarms, arms, bikini, legs:** every 6 weeks

**Chest, back :** every 8 weeks

Please contact us as soon as possible if you experience any blistering or increase pain. Contact us if you are concerned about infection. If any pigment changes are bothersome or persist beyond 4 weeks, please contact us at 410-398-3041.

I have reviewed the Pre and Post Treatment Instructions for Laser Hair Reduction and had my questions answered fully and to my satisfaction.

Patient Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_