Co2 LASER PRE & POST INSTRUCTIONS

**Pre-Treatment Instructions:**

* Do not drink alcoholic beverages 24 hours before your treatment to avoid extra inflammation.
* Do not have laser treatment if you are pregnant or breastfeeding or suffer from any neurological disorders. Patients who have been on Accuatane in the last year will also not be treated.

* It is recommended to discontinue the use of Aspirin, Motrin, Gingko Biloba, Garlic, Flax Oil, Cod Liver Oil, Vitamin A, Vitamin E or any other essential fatty acids at least 3 days to 1 week before and after treatment to minimize bruising or bleeding. Please consult with your primary physician prior to discontinuing any medications.
* Avoid alcohol, caffeine, Niacin supplement, high-sodium foods, high sugar foods, refined carbohydrates, spicy foods and cigarettes 24-48 hours before and after your treatment. These items may contribute to increased swelling or irritation.
* If you have a history of cold sores with outbreaks occurring more than 4 times a year, it is recommended that you are pretreated with medication prior to the injection treatments around or near the oral area. The medication will need to be initiated 3 days prior to your treatment visit. Please consult with your primary care physician in obtaining the medication (Valtrex 500 mg BID, 5 days, start 2 days prior to treatment) if you do not receive it at your initial consultation.
* If you develop a cold/flu, cold sore, blemish, or rash, etc. in the area to be treated prior to your appointment, we recommend that you please reschedule your appointment until it resolves.
* It is recommended to discontinue Retin-A, hydroquinone, or all other products with active ingredients (i.e glycolic, salicylic, AHA, BHAs, any photosensitive medications, etc) 1 week before treatment to avoid any increased redness and irritation.
* It is recommended that you wait at least 2 weeks (prefer 1 month) to have Co2 Laser treatments performed if you have previously had cosmetic treatments.
* Drink a lot of water the two days leading up to the procedure.
* Prior to procedure, you will need to purchase:
  + Vaseline or Aquaphor healing ointment
  + Distilled white vinegar
  + Ibuprofen and Benadryl

**Day of Treatment:**

* Plan to arrive half an hour before your laser appointment time for pictures and numbing cream application.
* Please come to the office with a clean face with no lotion, make-up, or sunscreen. If you do not have an opportunity to clean your face prior to your appointment, please notify your provider as we do have products available.
* A button up shirt is preferred so you do not have to pull a shirt over your head after your treatment. Please remove all jewelry and pull hair back if possible.
* Plan on going straight home after the procedure.
* Do not wash hair until next day. When showering for the first few days after treatment, face away from the shower head and avoid hot water.

**Post-Treatment Instructions:**

* Before leaving the office, please schedule your follow up appointment for 2-3 days after your laser treatment.
* Go directly home after your treatment. The post-procedure discomfort should last approximately 8-10 hours. Take Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) 600 mg or Tylenol every 6 hours to control discomfort.
* For the first night, it is recommended that you sleep with your face elevated on your back with pillows on each side to prevent you from rolling onto your face. A recliner chair is ideal but not required.
* On the day of procedure and the 2 days following (72 hours), begin doing washcloth or paper towel compresses of ½ distilled white vinegar and ½ water (equal parts) solution (can be mixed ahead of time and refrigerated) as often as needed (3-4 times a day is suggested). Treated areas will sting, but should be less severe by the end of day 2.
* After vinegar soaks, gently apply Aquaphor, Vaseline, or provided ointment to face. Do not let your skin dry out, you may need to apply 10-15 times a day. This should help reduce tightness and make you more comfortable. Do not pick or scratch your skin. Continue applying ointment to any rough areas.
* Discontinue all compresses and Vaseline application after day 3. You will notice a tightening of skin and the skin will gradually begin to peel over the next week. DO NOT peel or pick this skin (will result in scarring) but just allow gentle exfoliation to allow this peeling to complete its process
* For extreme itching, hydrocortisone cream (OTC 1%) may be applied or Benadryl may be taken.
* Rest. Avoid strenuous exercise, bending, straining, stooping or lifting heavy objects for at least 1 week after procedure. These activities may cause more swelling and pain on your face and slow down your recovery.
* Avoid heavy sun exposure for six months. Use zinc or titanium based sunscreen every day. Use a hat and sunglasses. Your skin is extremely vulnerable to the sun after having a laser treatment. Protecting your skin and limiting sun exposure ensures the best cosmetic results.
* Avoid the use of Retin-A or similar products (ex. Kinerase, Tazarac) until your skin is fully healed after treatment to avoid increased irritation or redness.
* Avoid wearing makeup until at least 7 days after treatment. If you must wear makeup at that point, we recommend a good quality mineral makeup for the face or Aquaphor ointment for the lips. Avoid liquid foundation.
* Please report to your provider immediately if you have increased pain, swelling, redness, blisters or itching following your treatment.

**Day 1 (first day after treatment):**

* Sun burned appearance with tight feeling
* Avoid direct sunlight and excessive heat
* Begin washing your face as needed with tepid water and gentle cleanser (use your hands only)
* May take tepid shower and wash hair
* Re-apply ointment/cream to treated area as needed. Skin should stay constantly moist.

**Day 2:**

* Swelling should subside and skin may bronze and feel gritty
* Itching (particularly along the jawline) tends to begin this day
* Continue applying ointment/cream and cool compresses if needed
* Continue washing face with gentle cleanser and tepid water
* For extreme itching, hydrocortisone cream (OTC 1%) may be applied.
* AVOID picking or scratching

**Day 3:**

* Facial skin should begin peeling between days 3 and 5
* Continue washing face with gentle cleanser and tepid water
* Itching may persist
* The central aspect of the face should begin to exfoliate today leaving behind soft pink tissue
* Continue applying ointment/cream, especially on sides of face by hairline

**Day 4-7:**

* Itching has usually subsided
* May start more aggressive washing with fingertips to promote further exfoliation (do not pick).
* If using an occlusive oinment, may transition to a cream and spot treat drier areas that may still have some rough skin with ointment.
* Use non-irritating sunblock SPF 30+ with zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide when going outside
* If needed, may apply mineral makeup (powder)

**Day 7-28:**

* Continue appropriate moisturizer until skin has hydrated back to it’s normal level (3-4 weeks)
* May start regular skin care program as long as treated area is healed (no exfoliation).
* Continue applying sunblock SPF 30+ and use mineral makeup (powder) to protect treated areas. Do not use liquid foundation as it may clog pores and irritate new skin
* Avoid exposure to excessive sun for up to 4 weeks. A hat and protective clothing must be used to protect treated areas.
* May return to exercise programs

**Healing with vary based on individual and intensity of treatment.**

**Call the Office – 406-586-2620**

* If you have a severe headache, fever, weakness, or other significant change in your health, seek emergency care and notify our office.
* For any muscular or nerve changes or other unexpected side effects of treatment.
* Call the office immediately if problems of increased pain, fever, drainage of pus, signs of infection or bleeding occur.

**Next Steps**

* Allow 3-6 months to see full benefit; although you will notice immediate changes, it generally requires 2 weeks to see the full affect without swelling and redness may take a month or more for redness to subside.
* You will have follow up appointments at 2-3 days after treatment and then again at 4-6 weeks after treatment. If you have any concerns or questions in between those time frames, please do not hesitate to call our office.