

Fractionalized CO₂ Laser Pre and Post Instructions

Fractionalized CO₂ laser is an ablative treatment for the skin to reduce the appearance of sun damage as well as fine lines and wrinkles, while promoting collagen formation and skin tightening. It may be utilized to compliment other procedures such as fillers and Botox, or it may be used as a stand-alone procedure. Fractionalized laser is different from fully ablative lasers because it leaves microscopic areas of normal skin, thereby speeding healing time and minimizing downtime, without sacrificing results. Furthermore, it reduces the risk of adverse side effects including scarring and pigmentary changes that may previously have been associated with fully ablative lasers. Typical healing time for fractionalized laser is approximately 5 to 7 days.

Often times, one session will achieve optimal results; however, additional full or targeted sessions may occasionally be needed to obtain maximal results.

Medications: We will prescribe to your pharmacy at least 5 days before your procedure.

- Acyclovir 400 mg- Take once daily for 10 days. Start 5 days before your procedure.
- Keflex 500mg Take twice daily for 7 days. Start the day of procedure. If PCN allergy Doxycycline will be sent.
- HCTZ 12.5 mg take 2 immediately after the procedure and 1 everyday as long as you have swelling.
- Vicodin-Take one at the time of your arrival to the office and then take 1 every 6 hours for pain.

Before Treatment

- You will have a “pre” appointment approximately 3 days before the procedure. At this visit, we will provide you with information, instructions, and some products you will need to treat this skin after the procedure. At this time, you should address any questions, concerns, and any medication needs (such as Valtrex to prevent cold sores).
- Avoid sun exposure for at least 1 week before the procedure. Strict sun avoidance is also necessary after the procedure. Therefore, you must obtain a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF of 30 or higher before the procedure takes place.
- Avoid use of retinoids (Retin-A, Renova, Differin, Tazorac, products with retinol) and other harsh products for approximately 3 days before the procedure.
- Avoid NSAID medications, including but not limited to, Aspirin, Advil, Ibuprofen, Motrin, Naproxen, Aleve, Excedrin, etc. for at least 3 days before your appointment.
- Aquaphor, white vinegar, and distilled water are OTC products that we recommend for use after the treatment, therefore please purchase these prior to your procedure. Please review your “To Do” List.
- Please arrive to your appointment wearing no make-up. Wear comfortable clothing, possibly a button-down shirt that is easy to remove as ointment will be applied after the treatment. Bring a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses to wear home after the procedure.
- Please arrive 1 hour before your actual appointment, to allow time for pictures and topical anesthesia.

After Treatment

- You will experience a burning sensation on the skin that will last between 1 to 3 hours. This is normal and will subside. You may use ice for this and for the remainder of the day. Wrap the ice pack in a soft cloth and apply for approximately 15 minutes per hour.
- You may experience some mild discomfort or sensitivity. You may take Tylenol for this. Avoid NSAID medications, including but not limited to, Aspirin, Advil, Ibuprofen, Motrin, Naproxen, Aleve, Excedrin, etc. for at least 72 hours as these may delay healing and increase risk of bleeding and bruising.
- Avoid heavy lifting, bending, and strenuous exercise for at least 72 hours.
- Sleep with your head elevated with an extra pillow or two for the first night. This will help to minimize swelling that may occur overnight.
- Treatment of the eye area may result in swelling and/or redness which may persist up to 72 hours. Cleanse your eyes with cool water and pat dry gently. Avoid hot water and getting any of the creams into the eyes. If the eyes feel dry, you may use lubricating eye drops, such as ReFresh eye drops.



CO₂ laser is a carbon dioxide laser that has been used for more than 20 years in the aesthetic industry. Until recently, this type of laser was fully ablative, meaning that it treated the entire surface of skin in the treated area. This led to significant wound healing time, and symptoms such as excessive redness, pain, and pigmentary changes.

Now a newer technology has emerged, known as fractionalized CO₂ laser. Fractionalized means that not all of the skin surface is treated, leaving behind microscopic areas of untreated skin. What this means to the patient is a safer procedure with faster healing. The patient experiences less pain and has significantly less down-time, with a reduced risk for adverse side effects.

How does CO₂ laser work?

The laser light heats up the epidermis and vaporizes the skin surface in the superficial layers. This smoothed out fine lines and wrinkles and retexturizes the skin, while reducing the appearance of sun damage and pigmentation. It also stimulates collagen production and tightens skin, providing long term benefits.

How long do the results last?

The natural aging process and rate varies widely from person to person. The duration of results from the CO₂ laser depends largely on the patient. Generally speaking, results may last up to 2 to 3 years. However, if the patient takes care of the skin, protecting it from sun exposure and using repairing medications such as retinoids or antioxidants, results may last longer.

Who is a good candidate for CO₂ laser?

Fractionalized CO₂ laser is safe and effective for almost all skin types. It is useful in treating fine or superficial lines and areas of sun damage. It plumps the skin, softens lines and tightens loose or lax skin.

How many sessions will I need?

This procedure was originally designed as a single session treatment, and will provide significant results in one session. However, some patients have more extensive damage in certain areas, in which case additional targeted or complete sessions may be needed.

How long does the procedure take?

You are advised to arrive for your appointment 1 hour before the appointed time, to allow for “pre” pictures and anesthesia administration. The actual time performing the procedure with the laser, however, most often takes less than 30 minutes.

What does the treatment feel like?

We administer topical anesthesia in order to make the procedure more comfortable. Even with this, you will experience what is described as a warm sharp feeling as the laser delivers its energy. Afterwards, you may feel a mild “sunburn” type reaction with a slight burning sensation. We will apply cooling devices during the procedure and cold compresses will be applied after.

Schedule your complimentary consultation for Fractionalized CO₂ Laser TODAY!!

Days 1 to 3:

- Apply Aquaphor liberally. Keep the skin very hydrated at all times as this will promote wound healing.
- Vinegar soaks are very soothing to the skin and speed healing time. Mix one tablespoon of white vinegar with one cup of distilled water. Apply this very gently, dabbing the skin lightly with a soaked wash cloth. When completed, gently pat the skin dry and apply more Aquaphor. On the day of the procedure, do this approximately every 2 hours while awake. After 24 hours, do this 3 times per day, for days 2 and 3. Beyond this, no further soaks will be needed.
- You may wash the skin after 24 hours with cool water and a very gentle soap-free wash such as Neutrogena or Cetaphil. Gently pat the skin dry with a towel, do not rub the skin while it is healing.
- After 2 or 3 days, a fine scab may begin to form, this is normal and to be expected. Do not scratch, rub, or pick at the skin, as this may lead to scarring.
- Strict sun exposure avoidance is mandatory for proper healing and to avoid pigmentary changes to the skin.

Days 4 to 5:

- You may continue to wash the skin with cool water and a very gentle soap-free wash such as Neutrogena or Cetaphil. Gently pat the skin dry with a towel, do not rub the skin while it is healing.
- Begin applying Cicalfate to skin. This is less greasy than the Aquaphor, but also not as hydrating, so you will need to reapply more frequently. Consider alternating application with Aquaphor as this will be more moisturizing.
- If the skin feels tight, avoid extreme facial motions and continue to keep the skin moisturized with the Cicalfate and Aquaphor.
- You may experience some mild itching as the skin is healing. You may use a very mild cortisone (such as OTC hydrocortisone) as needed up to twice daily.
- At approximately Day 5, you may experience some clogged pores or breakouts. You may apply a topical antibiotic agent such as ClindaGel up to twice daily.
- Begin application of sunscreen daily on areas of skin that have peeled. The sunscreen must be broad spectrum with an SPF of 30 or higher. You must avoid all active sun exposure and tanning and wear sunscreen every day for a minimum of 6 to 8 weeks after the procedure to ensure proper healing and to avoid any pigmentary changes.
- At approximately Day 4 or 5, the scabbing or crusting may begin to slough off. At this point, light powder make-up coverage is acceptable to cover the redness. We advise to use **new** make-up to avoid infection.

If at any time you experience significant or increasing redness, increased pain, increased swelling or heat of the skin, fever, chills, or night sweats, please contact the office immediately. Any other questions, concerns, or issues, please do not hesitate to contact us at (561) 750-0544.