
Postoperative Instructions for your Laser Resurfacing Procedure

What to Expect:

Recovery - The treated areas will be red and swollen after surgery. Many people feel like staying "under cover" for up to a week, depending upon how much surgery was performed. If your job requires you to be in contact with the public, you may wish to take a vacation for about one week.

Pain Relief - Fortunately, significant pain is not common following laser surgery. However, like sunburn, you may feel tingling or stinging. The treated areas may burn or sting for the first 1-2 days. This may be diminished by using a solution of one cup of water to one teaspoon of white vinegar kept in the refrigerator and used for cold compress to help alleviate any stinging or burning along with mild analgesics or applying ice packs to the area. If you do not have ice packs, try using a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a thin towel. Never place ice directly to skin, it can cause serious tissue damage. Cool water compresses may be used in place of the ice pack. You may also take Tylenol or the prescription pain reliever as prescribed.

Swelling - Expect moderate swelling initially. Swelling and redness may increase 24 to 48 hours after the procedure, depending upon the size and location of the treated areas. Eyelids will generally have more swelling than other areas. This is your body's normal response to surgery. The majority of the swelling will resolve in 1-2 weeks. It is important to use ice packs or "frozen peas" as much as possible for the first 48 hours. You should also sleep propped up on several pillows. Try not to lie flat.

Dressing - Following your surgery, Vaseline or Vaseline/bandage combination will be placed over the treated areas. If a bandage is used, you will be given specific instructions regarding its care. Apply the Vaseline to the treated areas 3-4 times a day to protect and lubricate the tender new skin. You should not let these areas "dry out." Vaseline will be required until complete healing has occurred (usually 7-10 days). Other skin preparations should be avoided during this period. Please refrain from using any product on the laser treated areas other than those recommended by Dr. Heir or his staff.

Crusting - Expect your treated areas to ooze or weep a clear, slightly sticky liquid which may dry as a golden brown crust. This weeping will last until the new skin forms (usually 3-7 days). Areas that were treated for deeper wrinkles will have a heavier yellow crust and will take up to two weeks to reach the smooth red stage. If some crusting does occur, it will usually go away with warm soaks or reapplication of Vaseline. **Do not rub, scratch, or pick at the treated areas.** Any trauma prior to complete healing could cause **permanent scarring.** Consider sleeping with white cotton gloves to prevent scratching your face with your nails while asleep.

Redness - Treated areas will initially be red. This redness usually resolves in 6-8 weeks. This can be covered with cosmetics in 7-10 days after surgery; however, please do not use any facial products or makeup until instructed by Dr. Heir as each patient's healing is different and will be treated accordingly.

Small White Spots - Approximately seven-to-ten days following surgery, you may see some small white spots (milia) develop under the skin. These are normal and may be opened very carefully, with **gentle** washing or Dr. Heir may "open" the milia in the office during your second or third postoperative visit. It is important for you to remember **not to rub, scratch, or pick** any of the areas on your face as it is healing.

General Information:

Wound Care - Use a vinegar solution (one cup of water to one teaspoon of white vinegar) compress then 2 hours later use a hydrogen peroxide solution (half peroxide / half water mix) compress. Continue alternating for _____ days. Rinse thoroughly, pat dry, and apply Vaseline to the treated areas. Baby shampoo may be used to remove the layer of Vaseline. This process will continue for approximately 2 weeks.

Bathing - You may take a bath or shower on the first day following surgery. If you have dressings on your face, try to keep them dry. After the dressings have been discontinued, you may gently wash your face with warm water and a mild soap, and pat dry. Do not rub with a towel or washcloth, as the treated areas are very delicate until healed. You may use a mild, non-irritating soap such as baby shampoo, Neutrogena, Dove, or Cetaphil. Be careful to avoid over-scrubbing

the treated area so as not to rub off the new skin, which is forming. If you see a spot bleeding, do not be alarmed...just massage that area more gently. Pat dry with a clean towel.

Exercise - Avoid strenuous exercise such as heavy lifting and aerobics for the first 1-2 weeks. This will help minimize swelling. Use common sense for other daily activities.

Sun Protection - **No tanning beds or sunbathing!** Avoid direct exposure to the sun for two weeks. The treated areas will be very susceptible to sun exposure and **permanent** damage can occur. When the crust has fallen off and new pink skin is exposed, it needs to be protected from the sun. Unprotected exposure to the sun may cause the area to heal darker than normal skin. A wide brimmed hat may be used to protect the treated areas if you must go outside during this period. After two weeks, you may go out with a sun block of SPF 30 or greater. This sun block should be worn any time you are outside for at least six months following your treatment.

Infection - Infection is very uncommon after laser surgery, if the area is properly cared for. However, you should contact us immediately if you experience: sudden increased pain, fever, or the development of small pustules. A soft, moist yellow scab is normal and does not represent an infection. Yet, this is exactly what needs to be cleaned away during the first 4 to 7 days.

Makeup - You may use makeup to cover once the area is smooth and red or pink in color and there is no crusting of the skin, and Vaseline is no longer needed (Approx. 2 weeks). You must wear a sun block of SPF 30 or greater under your makeup. If there is a question about this wait until you see Dr.Heir and his staff, we will be happy to assist you in the use of a sun block and cover up makeup.

Medications - Take all medications, as directed, which have been prescribed to you. These medications are important to prevent infection.

Skin Care Creams - Do not use Retin-A, or any alpha hydroxy acids for one month after surgery. A skin care program is recommended at that time to maintain a healthy complexion. Skin creams will be tailored to your specific needs. This can be scheduled through our office after your procedure.

Postoperative Day-to-Day Instructions for your Laser Resurfacing Procedure

Day Of Surgery

On the day of surgery, a dressing will be applied to the face. This is a multi-layered, bulky dressing comprised of a waterproof covering protected and secured fishnet-type of dressing. This dressing should stay in place for twenty-four hours and should not be removed. Do nothing for the first 24 hours except apply Vaseline and cold compresses.

Postoperative Day #1

You can expect the dressing to become moistened with the exudate from the skin. This is completely normal. On the first day after surgery, you will return to Dr. Heir's office for a dressing change. Dr. Heir will apply a dressing similar to that which was placed on the day of surgery. Again, this is a bulky dressing, which you can expect to become moistened with the exudate from the skin. This is completely normal and is to be expected.

Postoperative Day #2

On the second day following surgery at your postoperative visit, you will be advised when to remove the dressing from your face. Following dressing removal, begin to wash you face five or six times per day with a vinegar solution (one cup of water to one teaspoon of white vinegar) compress then 2 hours later use a hydrogen peroxide solution (half peroxide / half water mix) compress. Your face should be gently rinsed with this warm water. If you have any difficulty removing any exudate, crusts, or Vaseline you may use baby shampoo, Neutrogena, Dove, or Cetaphil. It is important that each time you wash your face, you then apply Vaseline to completely cover all exposed areas of your facial skin. It is normal for the skin of your face to be very red, as if you have a severe sunburn. There may be some dried crusting; this is completely normal but should be gently washed off as soon as crusting occurs. You will continue to wash and apply Vaseline to your face five or six times per day for the next seven days.

Postoperative Days #3 Through #7

You will continue to wash and apply Vaseline to your face five or six times per day. You will gradually see your skin change in appearance from very red, to dark pink, to a light pink hue. On the seventh day after surgery, you will return to the office to see Dr. Heir. On that day, do not

apply Vaseline to your face, but do wash your face and lightly apply a moisturizing cream such as Cetaphil moisturizer or the moisturizer you would normally use in your daily application of makeup. Do not use a moisturizer with a sunscreen at this time as your skin may be still too sensitive and could cause irritation. At your visit on the seventh postoperative day, Dr. Heir will evaluate your skin and direct further care.

Postoperative Days #8 Through #14

You will gradually see your skin become less and less pink. It is still important that you wash your face several times per day gently with your fingertips using warm water and vinegar and a moisturizing soap such as Dove®, Neutrogena®, or Cetaphil through days #8 & #9. Between days #10-14, you may begin wearing a light application of makeup; however, it is of key importance that the skin remains moist. At night you should use a moisturizer such as Aloe Vera Gel (without PABA) or the moisturizing cream that you customarily use in your daily application of makeup. On the fourteenth day following surgery, you will again return to Dr. Heir's office for another skin evaluation and further direction regarding care or changes that may be necessary.

Reasons To Call The Doctor

If, at any time following surgery, you develop fever blisters, experience pain in the area of treated skin, or develop a fever greater than 101.5 degrees you should contact Dr. Heir by calling him at 916-419-4588. If the office is closed, please dial Ext. 5 to be connected with Dr. Heir's cell phone.