

# INTENSE PULSED LIGHT THERAPY (IPL) – PATIENT INFORMATION

## **INTENSE PULSED LIGHT THERAPY (IPL):**

Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) is used to selectively treat a number of conditions including broken blood vessels (telangiectasia), redness, excess hair, sallowness and freckling. Usually, facial skin texture & tone is also improved after IPL treatment. Broken blood vessels and redness may be due to medical conditions including acne rosacea but are also caused by sun exposure, ageing, temperature extremes, topical steroid use, genetic influences and surgical scarring.

Avoid sun exposure and use a SPF 50+ sun block for 4 weeks prior to the procedure. A numbing (23/7) cream will be prescribed, made by CustomMed pharmacy and posted to your home. Treatment will not be done during pregnancy and numbing creams should not be used while pregnant or breastfeeding. Please let me know if you are taking aspirin, other blood thinners or anti-inflammatory medications, as we may need to reduce the treatment strength to avoid bruising.

## **THE PROCEDURE:**

If you are suntanned or have a fake tan, your treatment may be postponed. Please come without makeup/sunblock and inform me if you have any tattoos in the area, including permanent makeup. Face treatments: 45 minutes before your appointment, apply exactly one teaspoon (5mls) of 23/7 cream to clean, dry skin from forehead to chin and out to the ears. Extend 1cm outside the edges of the area to be treated (into hair, below jawline) and put a small amount inside nostrils. Avoid the red parts of the lip and stay 1cm away from eyes. Use an Alice band to hold longer hair back. Some people are very sensitive to the anaesthetic cream and feel dizzy or unwell, please wash off and use less or none in the future. 23/7 cream is only used on the face and expires after a few months.

Your face will be photographed preoperatively. Your eyes must be protected with patches or goggles from the IPL and they will be covered before treatment. Even though your eyes are covered, you will notice bright flashes of light. If numbing cream isn't used, each pulse of the IPL feels like a hot and sharp rubber band flick. The strength of the treatment may be reduced if you find it too uncomfortable. On the face, 3 treatments are usually required, these are 4 or more weeks apart. The nose, neck & décolletage may require more treatment sessions, this will be discussed before treatment.

## **POSTOPERATIVE COURSE:**

The treated area will be red for a few hours after treatment. Cold packs, aloe vera and other moisturisers may be applied to ease any discomfort. Your skin usually feels tight and somewhat irritated like mild sunburn for a few days. You may apply moisturiser and cosmetics over the treated area straight away. Treatment near the eyes usually causes some swelling, lasting for a few days. Treated freckles in the area usually darken and peel off in the week after treatment, especially after the first treatment. If crusting occurs, apply Vaseline frequently and notify me, it will usually last 1-2 weeks. It is important to avoid sun exposure and use sun block SPF 50+ for 4 weeks before your treatment, throughout the course of treatment and for at least 3 months following your last treatment to prevent the development of pigmentation and freckling in the treated area.

## **COMPLICATIONS:**

Some problems are resistant to treatment and may require extra treatments (the nose, neck and décolletage) or a change to a different laser system. In particular, freckles and larger brown spots may not always respond to IPL. Most problems will recur after a few years but maintenance therapy can prevent this. Changes in skin colour including darkening, freckling and lightening may occur and are more common in darker skin. In some areas, particularly the neck, you may notice patterning or a line between treated and untreated areas. Usually it is only seen between the first and second treatments and goes after the second treatment. Uncommon complications include prolonged redness, severe swelling, blistering, scabbing, bruising, scarring and permanent hair loss in the treated area. Tattoos, including permanent makeup, may be damaged by the treatment.

If you have any questions or problems during the course of your treatment please call: Adelaide Skin & Eye Centre 8211 0000 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).