

LASER SCAR REVISION

PATIENT INFORMATION

Lasers are able to smooth out irregularities in scars, grafts and flaps with a similar effect to 'sanding' the surface. As with sanding, there is usually improvement rather than complete resolution of irregularities. The surrounding skin is also lightly lasered to restore a smoother contour and even colour to the facial skin.

THE PROCEDURE:

Your face is photographed before and after treatment. Local anaesthetic is injected and numbs the area to be treated (but does not make you go to sleep). The eyes need to be protected from the laser beam with shields or patches before starting treatment. The treatment itself takes 10 – 20 minutes. The laser makes some "popping" noises. A smoke evacuator is used to remove fumes – this sounds like a vacuum cleaner.

POSTOPERATIVE COURSE:

The treated area will look red & raw immediately postoperatively. A thin layer of Vaseline or antibiotic ointment will be applied. After the anaesthetic wears off (about 1 to 2 hours) the area will feel slightly swollen & stinging.

Please use ice packs (e.g. frozen pea packet in a clean tea towel) hourly for 10 to 15 minutes on the day of the procedure to reduce swelling and bruising.

The area will develop a slightly weeping crust. Use saline or 3% hydrogen peroxide morning & night with gauze or cotton buds to help remove all the crusts then apply Vaseline & either Melolin and Micropore tape or a double layer of Hypafix tape until wound is healed. If a dressing cannot be applied, Vaseline should be applied every 2 hours during the first 3-5 days. Do not get peroxide in the eyes.

After a few days, cleaning and Vaseline with a dressing should be used daily. If the area dries out, more frequent application of Vaseline may be used. An appointment will be made for review within the next few days and sometimes the following week too. It will take 2 to 3 weeks for your face to heal.

After you have healed it is very important that you should regularly apply a SPF 50+ sunscreen all year round, but especially in the first 3 months to prevent brown pigmentation and freckling. A flesh coloured zinc stick and a hat should be used when you are outside.

COMPLICATIONS:

1. Infection of the lasered area is uncommon and usually causes intense pain. Antibiotics are used in some cases to reduce the risk of infection. Cold sore virus may also cause problems. If you suffer from cold sores, please let us know before the laser surgery and we will arrange for you to take anti-viral medication twice daily starting on the evening before the procedure.
2. Changes in the colour of your skin may occur after laser treatment. Everyone is red after treatment. This usually settles after 2-3 months but may be very persistent in some people. It is normal for the skin to be slightly lighter after the laser treatment but on occasion, this may be marked. Some people, particularly those with olive or darker skin, develop increased pigmentation (brown patches) after laser treatment. Again, this will usually return to normal after 2-3 months. To prevent this problem, it is very important to avoid sun exposure after laser treatment and to wear sun block daily all year round once the skin has healed.
3. Worsening of the scarring is a very uncommon complication of laser treatment. If it occurs, early treatment with cortisone creams and special dressings can help with this problem.

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)