

LASER TREATMENT FOR BENIGN FACIAL TUMOURS PATIENT INFORMATION

Lasers are able to accurately destroy small benign facial tumours. After removing the lesions, I usually also lightly laser the surrounding skin to restore a smoother contour and even colour to the facial skin. A biopsy may be necessary to confirm the type of tumour prior to laser treatment.

THE PROCEDURE:

Your face is photographed before & after treatment. Local anaesthetic is injected and numbs the area to be treated (but does not make you go to sleep). It is important for the eyes to be shielded from the laser beam & they will be covered prior to starting treatment. The treatment itself takes 10 – 20 minutes. The laser makes some “popping” noises. During the treatment a smoke evacuator is used to remove fumes–this makes a noise rather like a vacuum cleaner.

POSTOPERATIVE COURSE:

The treated area will look red and 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 and 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 morning and night with gauze or cotton buds to help remove all the crusts, then apply Vaseline and either Melolin and Micropore tape or a double layer of Hypafix tape. If a dressing cannot be applied, Vaseline should be applied every 2 hours during the first 3-5 days.

After a few days, Saline 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 often 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 sunscreen all year round, but especially in the first 3 months.

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 me know before the laser surgery and I will arrange for you to take anti-viral medication starting on the morning of 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. 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.
4. Some lesions may not go away completely after laser treatment. It is also possible for some lesions to come back again. I will discuss this with you before the laser surgery.

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)