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Fact Sheet Hair removal (en)

How does laser treatment remove unwanted hair?

The more commonly used laser systems for hair removal depend on the high level of energy in the laser light being taken up by the melanin pigment within the hair, which converts this energy into heat, destroying not only the hair but the hair matrix and hair bulb at the base of the follicle. The heat generated in the hair follicle is conducted down to the base of the follicle much more readily in an Anagen (hair in growth phase) hair, which is still connected to the base of the follicle, than in the resting Telogen hair, when any heat generated has to cross the gap to reach the future hair-producing region. This is why most effective laser assisted hair removal occurs when the follicles are in the active Anagen growing phase. Because hair grows in different phases and not all follicles are in the Anagen phase, multiple treatments are almost always required.

In order to understand how some lasers can remove hair, it is important not only to consider the structure of a growth cycle of the hair, but also the colour of the hair. Hair consists of mainly a hard protein called Keratin, produced by the hair bulb, which is situated deep within the dermis.

The colour of the hair depends on the presence of a pigment known as melanin, which is produced, by pigment producing cells, the melanocytes, which are found in the hair bulb. The ultimate colour of the hair is determined genetically and by the type of melanin produced by the melanocytes. Hair growth occurs in a cyclical fashion, with an active growing phase called Anagen and a resting phase called Telogen. During Anagen the hair is connected directly to the hair matrix in the base of the hair follicle. During the resting phase, however the hair bulb moves away from the base of the follicle so there is a gap between the bottom of the hair and the bottom of the hair follicle.

The best results also occur when there is plenty of target pigment melanin in the hair and therefore white, blond and grey hair can be more difficult to treat than deeply pigmented hair.

How does laser treatment work?

The introduction of the new Lyra Long Pulsed laser system is especially good for Asian or Afro-Caribbean patients because laser treatment for unwanted hair using this new system greatly reduces the risk of any significant pigmentary changes in the skin.

The major advantage of laser assisted hair removal is that it is effective in most patients and much faster and less painful than electrolysis. Recent studies have shown a significant reduction in unwanted hair of between 50-80%, two years after a course of treatment with the Ruby laser.

For the laser treatment to work there must be hairs in the hair follicles, so do not wax or pluck them for 1 month before treatment. The hair should be visible, so do not shave on the day before or the day of the treatment.

We wish to stress that it is unrealistic to expect all unwanted hair to disappear with laser treatment, but very significant improvement occurs in most treated patients.

What will I expect after the treatment?

The skin will be a little red and swollen around some of the treated hair. This usually settles within 24 hours. Blistering and weeping can occur but this is usually only in the first couple of days and settles completely. Some hairs will remain in the follicles but will fall out with time.

After treatment it is very important to protect the treated skin from sun exposure. This will reduce the risk of hyperpigmentation and also tanning the skin will reduce the effectiveness of the laser at your next visit.

HAIR REMOVAL PRICE LIST

See our price list in the prospectus. These prices apply to treatments carried out by Laser Nurses. Prices indicated are a guideline only. Treatment prices are confirmed at consultation.