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## Fact Sheet Skin resurfacing for lines & wrinkles

### How are wrinkles caused?

Wrinkles occur because all layers of the skin become progressively thinner with increasing age, due to exposure to the sun's ultraviolet light. Some of the thinning is due to changes in the dermis, and with increasing age there is a progressive loss of the main support tissue, collagen, and damage to the elastin fibres in the skin. The upper layer of skin, the epidermis, also becomes progressively thinner with increasing age. It is these changes that lead to wrinkling. In addition, over the years, continuous contraction of the tiny facial muscles attached to the deeper part of the skin also lead to wrinkling, producing permanent 'laughter lines' around the eyes and frown lines on the forehead.

### How does laser treatment work?

Most facial wrinkling can be improved by skin resurfacing using the Pulsed CO<sub>2</sub> and Erbium: YAG lasers. The effect of these lasers depends on the severity of the wrinkling. Patients with mild wrinkling may expect most of their wrinkles to go, whereas patients with a severe degree of wrinkling will usually see a marked improvement in their wrinkles, but it would be unusual for them to disappear altogether. However, more than one treatment may be necessary to achieve the best results.

The Pulsed CO<sub>2</sub> and Erbium: YAG lasers restructure the skin by applying very high laser power in very short bursts to the affected area. Because of the sophisticated technology involved, there is minimal damage to the skin and so the risks of scarring are very low.

Treatment with the Pulsed CO<sub>2</sub> laser may only require a local anaesthetic, which is injected into the areas that are going to be treated. Sometimes an anaesthetic called a "field block" will be used to freeze one of the main nerves to the face to reduce any discomfort. Some patients may wish to have a general anaesthetic or deep sedation for the whole procedure and this will be discussed at the consultation. Paracetamol tablets taken one hour before the procedure, and six hourly afterwards, can be also be helpful.

Once the anaesthetic has worked, the eyes are protected with moist gauze and special goggles. The procedure itself may take from thirty minutes to two hours depending on the number of laser passes that are necessary. Around the mouth, two to five passes may be necessary, whilst around the eyes only one or two passes are usual. After each pass with the Pulsed CO<sub>2</sub> laser, the treated skin has to be cleansed before a further pass is carried out.

Treatment with the Erbium: YAG laser, usually only requires the application of a local anaesthetic cream or gel, one or two hours before the procedure. However, if extensive areas of the face are to be treated, a field block may also be carried out, or again a general anaesthetic.

In addition to skin resurfacing, other effective treatments include L-ascorbic acid or a course of glycolic peels, which can commence six to twelve months after the resurfacing procedure if required.

It is very unusual to develop scarring following the use of the resurfacing lasers. The lasers have been designed to very exacting technological standards to try and ensure as far as possible that scarring is not a possibility. However, very rarely, a minor degree of scarring has been reported in a small minority of patients, but this can usually be controlled with a steroid injection into the scar tissue itself and also by treatment with a Pulsed Dye laser.

The commonest post-operative complication is post-laser therapy hyperpigmentation. This increased pigmentation in the skin is much more common in people who tan easily.

Hypopigmentation can also occur after laser resurfacing. In this condition the skin has less pigment and will look paler than previously. This is usually mild and best treated with sun blocking creams. Lasercare SPF 30 is recommended. This almost always happens in black and Asian skin and as a general rule resurfacing should not be

carried out in people with this skin type. Glycolic acid peels can be an alternative to laser therapy for people with darker coloured skin.

## What will I see after the treatment?

Following a skin resurfacing procedure, the treated area will look red, sore and swollen. This is because the top layers of the skin (epidermis) have been removed. It is normal for the treated area to leak a serous fluid. This is the healing process beginning to work.

The swelling will subside within four to five days, but patients may experience some crusting as the skin begins to heal. If crusting is experienced, then the affected area may, very carefully be cleansed/soaked with a clean flannel and tepid water. **DO NOT** attempt to dislodge or pick off any of these crusts, as the delicate new skin underneath will become scarred (full aftercare instructions will be given on the day of the procedure).

It is quite usual for the treated area to remain red for several weeks after the procedure. This is absolutely normal and is one of the positive signs that the treatment has worked. The redness is due to an increased number of blood vessels in the skin, which will help to keep it healthy in the future. Eventually the redness will fade. This may take between six weeks and four months (in exceptional cases), and patients may initially benefit from the use of our L-ascorbic acid and glycolic acid products, which will help to reduce the duration of any redness.

To minimise the risk of pigmentation, it is extremely important that you use a sunscreen of SPF 40 for at least six months following treatment, to protect the skin from harmful ultraviolet rays.

## When will I see any results?

The best results are seen six to ten months after the skin resurfacing procedure. It is quite possible to repeat the treatment on any remaining wrinkles on your face, but this should not be done for at least six months after your previous laser treatment. It has been found however, that most patients are satisfied with the results of the initial laser procedure and because of this, requests for a second treatment are uncommon.

## Price List (LA)

Minor Treatment		
Half a Facial Unit	CHF	800
Small Area (such as acne or chicken-pox)	CHF	400
Mole Removal	CHF	200
(at the same treatment session additional moles)	CHF	120
Facial Lines & Wrinkles, Acne Scarring		
Per Facial Unit	CHF	1600
Two Facial Units	CHF	2400
Full Face	CHF	3400

Additionally, General Anesthesia must be paid extra if needed

Further follow up reviews will be CHF 120 with a doctor.

For any further information please call us on 044 225 41 41