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Fraxel

What is it

Fractionated resurfacing of the skin is performed using an infrared laser (1540nm). The laser uses a series of microbeams which penetrates the skin and reshapes the collagen. By helping to regenerate this part of the skin, the surface is rejuvenated.

What is it for

Fractionated resurfacing can treat several conditions since it decreases blotchy sun spots, smoothes the skin texture and tightens the skin. Fractionated resurfacing is for patients with moderate facial sun damage. It also is used for smoothing acne scars and diminishing melasma. It may also reduce fine wrinkles and shrink pores. Because of this laser's wavelength, there is a lower risk for complications such as pigmentation in individuals with darker skin.

How many treatments

Depending on the condition, 3-5 treatments may be required. Generally, each treatment will take 45 minutes. Treatments are performed every 4-6 weeks.

How to prepare

The Fraxel is very photosensitizing that means that many patients will become very red like a sunburn and also have peeling. Therefore you must not be on any medications that make you sensitive to the sun. You should stop these medications three days before the procedure and may restart them three days after the procedure. Some of these medications include: Retin-A; Doxycycline; Hydrochlorothiazide. If you have taken Accutane in the past year, then you can not have a fraxel treatment since you would be at a higher risk for scars. Because this procedure makes you more sensitive to the sun, you should wear a broad brimmed hat.

A topical anesthetic is necessary for the Fraxel. This anesthetic will be prescribed and you will need to pick it up at a pharmacy. It should be applied 45 minutes before the procedure.

If you have a history of cold sores, Dr. Gladstone will need to prescribe pills that you will need to start one day before the procedure and take for three days. A prescription will be written for you.

For some patients with darker skin, a small test patch may be necessary.

If you do not have an active ulcer or gastritis, then you should take 400 mg (2 tablets) of ibuprofen to reduce redness and swelling.

What to expect on the day of the procedure

When you arrive, we will photograph you and Dr. Gladstone may mark certain areas that have more extensive damage. We will have you wash off the numbing cream. While the numbing cream can be effective alone for some patients, Dr. Gladstone may give you numbing injections so you will not feel the laser. You will wear protective eye shields, and should keep your eyes closed. The procedure itself takes approximately 30 minutes. We will then apply a cream. It is important that that you bring a broad brimmed hat to the procedure and wear it following the procedure.

What to expect following the procedure

While this is a very effective procedure for the appropriate conditions, there is downtime. Your face will become red (potentially "apple" red) like a sunburn, and you will peel like a sunburn. Your face will be red for 2-3 days and fade to a light pink for 2-3 days. You should be able to return to work in 2 days (unless you work from home). If you are doing this procedure on a Thursday, you will want to take Friday off.

Post Procedure Care

- 1. Avoid the sun—for the first three days. Stay away from windows as the sun penetrates the glass.**
- 2. Wear a broad-brimmed hat.**
- 3. Apply Cetaphil cleanser/cream for the first 5 days.**
- 4. Three days after the procedure, you may start applying sun block with either titanium dioxide or zinc oxide.**
- 5. If you are taking the antiviral medication, please remember to finish the course.**
- 6. If you have discomfort after the procedure, you may take 400 mg (2 tablets) Ibuprofen up to three times per day. Please take it with food.**
- 7. If you have concerns during the post procedure period, please call the office at 650-725-5272.**