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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT TATTOO REMOVAL

Tattoos are removed by lasering the surface of the skin and allowing a scab to form. The tattoo pigment soaks into the scab and is shed when the scab falls off. Most tattoos are not completely removed with one treatment, but several separate sessions are usually needed for satisfaction. Treatments are usually scheduled on a monthly basis. Lasers are most successful at removing black tattoos. Green tattoos are the most difficult to remove. The patient should understand that one or several of the following may occur:

- ◆ **A SORE THAT NEEDS TO HEAL** Each time the skin is removed, a new scab needs to form in order to trap the tattoo pigment. This causes a tender area that heals over two to four weeks.

- ◆ **INCREASED BRIGHTNESS OF THE TATTOO PIGMENT** During the first one or two sessions of tattoo removal, the new skin may grow back a bit thinner and the tattoo may appear more intense, darker, or brighter than it was before removal. The tattoo fades over several removal sessions.

- ◆ **PARTIAL TATTOO REMOVAL** Some of the tattoo pigment may remain, even after the treatments. This is because some of the pigment may be so deep under the skin that it will not come out completely, without surgical excision.

POST-TREATMENT CARE

- ✓ You may want to place a bag of ice or frozen vegetables covered in a wash cloth on the treated site for 20 minutes. You may repeat this every 2-3 hours while awake.
- ✓ If you have continued irritation, you may purchase 1% hydrocortisone cream from your local pharmacy and apply to the treated site once per day.
- ✓ You may remove the bandage in 24 hours. You should put on another bandage for the next 2 days.
- ✓ If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Dermatology Clinic at 650.725.5272.