

### ***Spectra (Tattoo Laser) Treatment Pre and Post Care Guidance***

#### ***How should I prepare for my laser appointment?***

- a. Avoid sun tanning, indoor tanning and excess sun exposure for at least 4 weeks prior to treatment. A tan will influence the laser's ability to see its target and will decrease the effectiveness of treatment and increase risk of side effects. We may not be able to treat you if your skin is tan on the day of your appointment.
- b. Avoid spray tans and self tanners 4 weeks prior to your treatment.
- c. You may apply a topical over the counter numbing cream such as LMX 30, 60 and 90 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment for improved comfort. Covering the numbing cream with Saran Wrap will improve the effectiveness of the numbing cream. LMX is available at most pharmacies and online.
- d. The day of your scheduled treatment arrive at the clinic with freshly cleansed skin. Other than topical numbing cream, do not apply lotion, cosmetic or sunscreen to the treatment site prior to your visit. If you do please let the team know so the site can be cleansed prior to treatment.
- e. Avoid waxing the treatment area 2 weeks prior to your appointment.
- f. If the tattoo to be treated is in a thick hair bearing area you may shave the area the day prior to your treatment.

#### ***What can I expect during treatment with the tattoo laser?***

Treatment time varies from 15 to 45 minutes depending on the size of the area to be treated. Tattoo laser is not without discomfort. It is often described as the sensation of a rubber band snap. To make the process more comfortable a cooling device called a zimmer will be used and you can apply an over-the-counter numbing cream called LMX before your visit (see above). During treatment the tattoo will become immediately frosted turning a gray white color for a few minutes before becoming red and sometimes swollen. It typically feels warm to the touch like a sunburn after treatment. Once completed a mild ointment and a protective dressing will be applied.

#### ***What is the usual course of recovery after treatment with the tattoo laser?***

Expect discomfort that usually resolves within a few hours after treatment. Immediately after treatment the area may appear white, red or swollen and pinpoint bleeding may occasionally occur. The swelling and redness gradually diminish over 3-5 days. Some blistering and oozing is also possible. This generally heals within 1-2 weeks. The tattoo over the next 1-2 months will begin to look foggy, colors will shift and fade and lines will begin to break apart.

#### ***How do I care for my skin immediately after treatment with tattoo laser?***

- a. The day of treatment apply cloth wrapped cold compresses/ice packs in 15 minute intervals to the bandaged area to reduce pain and blistering. Tylenol may also be used for discomfort.
- b. If an extremity is treated such as an arm or leg, elevation of this extremity will reduce swelling. Upper extremities should be elevated above the heart and lower extremities above the waist.
- c. You may shower following your treatment, but re-ice and apply a fresh layer of Aquaphor ointment and a protective nonstick telfa pad after showering.
- d. Before bed apply Aquaphor ointment and keep the treated area covered with a nonstick telfa pad. The following day wash the treated area with mild

soap and water, pat dry and apply a fresh layer of Aquaphor ointment and a clean dressing. Repeat daily until crusting, blistering and scabbing have fully resolved.

- e. If the treatment area is itchy, you may use an over the counter 1% hydrocortisone cream twice a day for up to 1 week for management.
- f. Do not pick, peel, scrub or remove scabs. Allow them to slough naturally. Premature removal of scabs may cause scarring and increase risk of infection.
- g. Avoid waxing and shaving the area until fully healed.
- h. Avoid prolonged sun exposure on the treatment site and keep the area covered with a protective bandage, clothing or frequent application of zinc oxide-based sunscreen (SPF 45+) for 4 weeks after treatment.
- i. Do not soak the treated area in hot tubs or baths and avoid saunas until all scabbing has fully resolved.
- j. Avoid vigorous exercise for 48-72 hours after your treatment.
- k. Stay active and drink plenty of fluids to assist your lymphatic system in removal of the ink from your tissue.

***How long should I wait between treatments?***

Treatments should be spaced on average 6-8 weeks apart to allow adequate time for full recovery and clearance of fragmented tattoo ink.

***Are there patients who should not undergo treatment with the tattoo laser?***

Some patients are not ideal candidates for the tattoo laser removal. Patients who have a history of an allergy to tattoo pigment or are pregnant are generally not treated. Patients with active skin infections or open wounds in the treatment area should delay treatment until healed. Those with excess sun exposure or tan skin may not be able to be treated until the tan has faded because it will impact the efficacy and safety of the laser. Those with inflammatory skin diseases, such as psoriasis or lichen planus may need to be cautious because of risk of activating inflammatory skin disease in that area.

***We are looking forward to working together towards a goal of healthy beautiful skin.***