



Save Face

Laser & IPL Fact Sheet



Patient information Laser & IPL (Intensed Pulse light)

What is laser & IPL (Intensed Pulse light)?

Over the last decade the use of light such as Lasers and Intense Pulsed Light sources (IPLs) machines/ devices to treat cosmetic & medical skin conditions has grown and developed considerably and is now widely adopted to treat a range of cosmetic indications including;

- ↘ Hair removal, tattoos, birthmarks and various skin lesions, cellulite, acne and acne scarring
- ↘ reducing the visibility of blood vessels and skin pigmentations
- ↘ rejuvenating the skin
- ↘ reducing the appearance of fat/body contouring

How Does it Work?

Lasers machines work by producing a beam of light specific to the area of skin being treated that is monochromatic (has a single wavelength). The laser beam selectively damages specific targets in the area being treated (e.g. capillaries, brown spots or tattoo pigment in the skin) allowing the area to be replaced by new cells or removed altogether - depending on the desired treatment.

IPL for hair removal works by producing an intense pulsed light (IPL) The light is a broad spectrum beam often used in the treatment of hair reduction whereby, the light travels through the skin detecting the hair follicles & upon detection the light is converted to a heat energy,

destroying most of the root (bulb) of the hair follicle. A small hand held device will be placed upon the skin to deliver the flashes of light to the treatment area. The light generated by the machine can be extremely harmful to the eyes therefore, eye protection must be worn by yourself and the treating practitioner at the time of treatment.

A course of sessions between (2-7) at monthly intervals will generally be required due to the 'hair growth cycle' as only 'active hairs' can be targeted and treated at any one given treatment time, meaning, the 'inactive' hairs will require treatment as they become 'active' A patch test will be required 24 hours in advance with most hair removal machines.

Your treatment should be carried out by a nurse, doctor or surgeons however, some manufacturers permit beauty therapists & aestheticians to carry out the treatments.

* Always check the person treating you is appropriately qualified and insured to carry out these treatments.

Used to treat – dependant on type of machine and manufacturer

Includes medical disorders of the skin such as;

- ↳ Psoriasis/eczema
- ↳ Acne rosacea
- ↳ Broken capillaries/telangiectasia
- ↳ Brown spots/age spots/sun-damage
- ↳ Birth marks
- ↳ Photo-rejuvenation/general skin rejuvenation
- ↳ Hair reduction – all-over body hair

Does it hurt?

With technological advances IPL/lasers are generally well tolerated and described as mildly uncomfortable with certain treatment areas being more sensitive than others (i.e

bikini line – hair reduction). The use of cooling gels, sprays and cold air is used throughout the treatment to cool the skin and to help with any discomfort.

After treatment

The after effects/downtime following a treatment of IPL are often minimal but will depend on the type of treatment performed, all of which should be explained to you beforehand. Some treatments (such as IPL for photo rejuvenation) may produce a mild sun burn sensation, temporary pinkness, and darkening and then flaking-off of freckles. Others, such

as laser treatments for some birthmarks, may produce intense bruising and swelling. Still others, such as treatments for acne scarring, may produce intense swelling and redness with perhaps pinpoint bleeding and oozing. If you have any concerns or side effects not listed here, please contact your clinician to discuss.

To reduce the risk of complications it is vital you follow the post treatment advice given to you by your practitioner;

ensure you protect the area treated from the sun and apply a sunblock/SPF 30 and above i.e every 4 hours to the skin.

Apply anti-septic gel/cream to the skin post treatment

In the event of signs of reddening, tender skin and/or signs of blistering, contact your practitioner in the first instance

Areas of skin treated may cause pigmentation to be darkened by bright light. This will gradually fade over a period of months. If certain areas of the skin have absorbed too much laser energy, noticeable patches of pale skin may become apparent and once again, will recover over a period of months.

Equally, if the skin has been caused to over-heat there is a small risk of blistering and therefore scarring, with darker skin types more at risk so additional care must be taken.

How long will it last?

No clinic, manufacturer or supplier can imply 'permanent hair removal' as this remains unproven and can be misleading for the consumer however, 'permanent hair reduction'

may be used as the treatment can only promise to significantly reduce hair growth but not remove it in its entirety. Top up sessions may also be required.

Is it safe?

The use of laser dates back to the 1960's with the last decade technological advances in the use of laser for skin conditions and hair removal have developed at a rapid pace with IPL hair removal being the 3rd most popular cosmetic procedure in the United States of America (American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (A.S.A.P.S.)

With as many as 30 different machines in the UK with variable treatment indications and limitations it is down to the consultation to offer specific advice and information about the procedure and type of machine to be used with expected treatment outcomes and associated risks.

Is it suitable for me?

IPL is generally not suitable for recently sun-tanned skins due to an increase risk of associated side effects & this may cause a delay on treatment until the tan has faded.

Ginger/red hair may respond poorly to IPL for hair removal with white/fair hair often not responding at all.

Mediterranean/middle eastern skin types will need to be treated with care with darker skin types such as African or Asian skin may not be suitable dependent on the machine/equipment to be used as the pigmentation in the skin attracts & absorbs too much energy resulting in an increased risk of side effects such as blistering, burning & potentially scarring.

With so many differing devices on the market, the risks may differ depending upon the machine to be used, your skin type & hair & eye colour – discuss this in length with your clinician at the point of consultation.

Certain medications are known to be photo-sensitive so you should always go through a thorough medical history with a medical practitioner prior to undergoing any treatments.

↳ Not suitable for those with photo-sensitive epilepsy

*From October 2010 clinics offering cosmetic laser/light treatments no longer had to register with the Care Quality Commission in the UK to offer and deliver these treatments. Previously all such clinics were inspected by the CQC and expected to work against minimal standards. Certain medical based laser light therapies do still require registration with the CQC such as psoriasis. In some locations, not all, throughout the UK, clinics are regulated by the local council.

*Please also note that since 1st October 2010 all clinics offering laser and light treatments for purely cosmetic indications such as hair removal are no longer required to be registered with the Care Quality Commission in England (regulations still apply in other countries). Previously clinics needed to follow certain standards for the safe operation and maintenance of these machines, and receive regular inspections by the CQC to ensure that national minimum standards were followed. In some English regions clinics and salons will still be regulated by local councils under health & safety regulations. However, many clinics who offer laser & IPL hair removal also offer other light based treatments that do still require CQC registration. This has indeed left the consumer somewhat vulnerable due to the de-regulation of cosmetic laser/IPL treatments within the UK.

Consumer Check List

What to Expect

- To be seen by a, doctor, nurse or dentist for your consultation and assessment
- To have sufficient time to consider all the information- avoid making hasty decisions
- To be treated by a doctor, nurse or dentist
- A follow up appointment if necessary or desired

Ask Questions

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| What is this treatment/product? | How many treatments will I need and in what time frame? |
| How does it work? | Are you able to treat complications, should they occur? |
| What are the side effects/risks? | What happens if I am not happy with the result? |
| What are the alternatives I might consider? | Is it painful? How do you minimise pain? |
| What results can I expect? | What aftercare am I expected to perform? |
| What will I look like immediately after? | What will it cost and what are the payment terms? |
| How long will the results last? | |

What to Check

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| You may check the qualifications of a doctor (www.gmc-uk.org), Nurse (www.nmc-uk.org) and dentist(gdc-uk.org) | Ask to see the unopened box of product/ medicine to be used and make a note of it for future reference, should you later see another clinician. |
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Be Safe

- ↘ Do not proceed with treatment if you do not feel comfortable with the practitioner
- ↘ Do not proceed with treatment if you do not fully understand the information you are given
- ↘ Take the necessary time to make your decisions
- ↘ Ask the practitioner to show you the product in its unopened package prior to treatment.
- ↘ Make a note of the practitioner's name and product used for future reference
- ↘ Ask for copies of before and after photographs for your reference
- ↘ Do not have treatment in your home, at 'parties' or exhibitions or in environments that are clearly not clean or appropriate.