

# FRAXEL LASER RESURFACING INSTRUCTIONS

## BEFORE SURGERY

- Review the consent form thoroughly and make sure all your questions are answered.
- You will be here for approximately 2 hours. Please arrange for someone to pick you up at the end of the treatment.
- Plan to take one week off of work/active social life.
- **If you get cold sores**, start taking Valtrex the day before surgery. Follow the instructions on the bottle.

## DAY OF SURGERY

- Eat a normal meal before you come to the office. It may be awkward to eat and drink for a few hours after surgery.
- Come to the office with no make up and a lower-cut, buttoned shirt. Do not wear your contact lenses the day of surgery (for treatments on the face).
- Bring filled prescriptions with you. You will start medication in the office immediately before surgery.

## AFTER SURGERY

Leaving the office you will be swollen and covered with Vaseline. You will experience weeping of the area immediately after the procedure. You will receive Extra Strength Tylenol before you leave. When you get home, you will need to start the showering routine as described in “General Care” and continue taking your Tylenol as directed.

### **What to expect:**

- Swelling and Redness. You will be swollen after surgery. Swelling peaks on the third day and will resolve within 1-2 weeks. Redness usually becomes very faint by one month, but may last up to 3 months.
- Weeping. A clear, sticky fluid (exudates) oozes from the skin for the first 3-4 days until the new skin forms.
- Crusting. Crusting or a scab may form if the exudates dry. If crusting occurs get in the shower. Always let the water hit your head and run down onto the treated area. Immediately reapply Vaseline. You must keep the treated area greasy to prevent scabbing and subsequent scarring. Do not rub or scrub off the scab. Just let water and Vaseline take care of it.
- Pain. You should have minimal discomfort. The treated areas may “burn” or “sting” for the first day or two. If your pain is not relieved by Tylenol, take your prescription medication.

### **What to watch for and contact us about:**

- Infection. Infections are possible but not common. Call us if you notice the following signs of infection: whitish to yellowish film on treated area, with or without foul odor; a fever (temperature of 100.4F or above), or a significant increase in pain.
- Scarring. May occur from crusting or infection.
- Pigmentation. Expect the initial reaction of your skin to be pinkness. This color may be splotchy and persist for weeks to months. You may conceal this color with concealer makeup as previously discussed. Some people – especially those who tan easily – will develop a darkening of the skin (hyperpigmentation) in about one month This post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation WILL FADE. Dr. Rotter may prescribe a bleaching cream for use before and after the laser procedure.
- Itching. Itching may start between day 5 and day 10. It may continue for about a week. This is normal. Skin repairing itself may itch. You MAY need to use a prescription to prevent yourself from scratching your new skin especially during sleep. We can, if necessary, provide you with a prescription for a steroidal cream. Trim your fingernails. After washing your face, apply the prescription cream, wait 10 –15 minutes then reapply Vaseline or moisturizer (whichever one you are using at the time).
- Acne or milia. A flare-up of acne or milia may occur due to use of the Vaseline. It may appear 3 – 4 days post treatment and resolves within one week. You may need to switch to a bland moisturizer (i.e. Eucerin cream or Cetaphil cream). Occasionally an oral antibiotic may be prescribed.
- Cold sores. The trauma of laser surgery can trigger a recurrence of cold sores. Dr. Rotter pre-medicates patients with any past history of cold sores. The surgery does not cause outbreaks in people who do not already have the herpes simplex virus. If you develop pain, fever, or groups of blisters notify Dr. Rotter as soon as possible. If you were given a prescription take the full course as directed.

#### **GENERAL CARE:**

VASELINE: Start with a NEW large jar of Vaseline Petroleum Jelly. Vaseline should cover the entire lasered area continually. Showering is the only time the lasered area will not be covered with Vaseline. Your face will be extremely greasy. (The use of dishwashing soap prior to showering (i.e. Palmolive or Dawn) will help lift the grease from your hair). Aquaphor is an alternative to Vaseline.

SHOWERING: You will need to shower for 5 minutes of every waking hour for the first 3 days. Always keep the water pressure low and the water temperature tepid. Allow the water to hit the top of your head and flow over the lasered area. Remain in the shower long enough so that the water penetrates the Vaseline and gets onto your skin. Some Vaseline may need to be dabbed off (be careful not to rub or scratch your face). At night time, there is no need to wake up to shower every hour.

INTERMEDIATE: At some point in the healing process, Dr. Rotter will have you stop using Vaseline and have you start using a fragrance-free moisturizer (i.e. Eucerin or Cetaphil Cream). Moisturizers should NOT contain any medications (e.g. alpha-hydroxy acids or retinoids). Continue using the moisturizer until directed otherwise.

COSMETIC USE: Dr. Rotter will let you know when you may use cosmetics, usually after 10 days. You may use make-up to cover the new pink skin – use a yellow concealer under your foundation to neutralize the redness. The pinkness will diminish and gradually fade over the first 3 months. Whenever you go outside after the first two weeks your skin must be covered with adequate sun block (Zinc Oxide for up to one month and then a sunscreen with at least a SPF 30 – reapplied every hour you are in the sun).

\*\*\* Dr. Rotter strives to make your recovery as smooth and relaxing as possible. He will see you several times during the first two weeks. If you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to call the office. A two-minute visit can alleviate a lot of anxiety. \*\*\*

Dr. Rotter's pager # for emergencies is 301-807-8807.