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**CO2 LASER RESURFACING AFTER-CARE INSTRUCTIONS**

**INTRO:**

Congratulations on your decision to get carbon dioxide laser resurfacing. These after-care instructions, along with our office staff, will help guide you through your recovery process. It is crucial that you and your caretakers **read through these instructions both BEFORE AND AFTER SURGERY**.

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Laser resurfacing is an exciting technology, which uses calibrated doses of carbon dioxide laser energy to resurface the skin. This has several immediate benefits on wrinkles and acne scarring, as well as pigment abnormalities caused by sun exposure. After laser resurfacing, the skin appears smoother. Laser has emerged as the most powerful modality for tightening wrinkled skin and reducing or eliminating wrinkles in areas such as the lips and Crow's feet areas. The laser imparts a permanent benefit onto the deeper, dermis layer of the skin, tightening for an additional six months after the laser procedure. Laser resurfacing also improves or completely removes pigment spots, precancerous lesions, and "liver spots" in addition to undesired wrinkles.

**HAVE CARETAKER WITH YOU:**

- Following your procedure, have an adult caretaker stay with you for the first 24-48 hours. You will be drowsy from the anesthesia and will not be able to drive for at least 24 hours.

**GROOMING:**

- For the first week, wash your face with Cetaphil facial cleanser 2 times per day.
- Apply a light coat of Aquaphor to the treated area.
- Use cold compresses if needed for comfort by keeping two wash clothes in a bowl of water with plenty of ice, and apply to the entire face for a few minutes, then alternate with the other washcloth.
- You may gently splash your face with water 1-2 times per day and follow with Aquaphor ointment.
- Always keep your face moist with a light coat of ointment.
- Do not allow water from showerhead to hit your face directly.
- Days 7-14 continue cleansing the area with Cetaphil 1-2 times per day.
- Do not pick or scratch at the treated area.
- Some patients benefit from ***vinegar soak treatments***:
  - Using gauze dipped in a bowl of 1 cup water and 1 tablespoon white vinegar in ice. These can be applied to the face for no more than 5-10 minutes, 3 times per day. Ask the nurse if you have more questions.

\*\*If irritation, burning, or stinging occurs at any time, discontinue products and notify your physician.

**PAIN AND PAIN MEDICATION:**

- Take pain medication with food.
- Vicodin (Hydrocodone + Acetaminophen) or Percocet (Oxycodone + Acetaminophen) should be taken as directed:
  - Mild to moderate pain: 1 tablet every 4-6 hours

- Severe pain: 2 tablets every 4-6 hours
- If your pain is mild, you may opt to take Tylenol (Acetaminophen) 1000 mg every 8 hours (which is 2 tablets of the Extra Strength Tylenol purchased over-the-counter).
- Take a stool softener, such as Colace, while taking pain medication to help prevent constipation.
- DO NOT DRIVE WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATION.
- DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOL WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATIONS.
- Take pain medication only if needed. The quicker you can wean off the pain medications, the better you will feel and heal.

**SUPPLEMENTS:**

- Do not take aspirin (or products containing aspirin) for 10 days after the procedure.
- Do not take herbal supplements (vitamin E, fish oil, hormone replacements) for 10 days after the procedure.
- An adequate diet with vitamin supplements, especially vitamin C, is recommended.
- Phentermine or appetite suppressants should not be taken until 6 weeks after the procedure since they increase heart rate and blood pressure which could interfere with your recovery.

**DO NOT SMOKE:**

- This is very important because smoking (tobacco, marijuana, or vapes) can result in a lack of blood supply to the tissues and fat, causing the tissue to die or delayed healing.
- Smoking can resume 4 weeks after surgery if there are no other complications present.

**POSITIONING/SLEEPING:**

- Sleep on your back with your head elevated at a 45° angle for one week after your procedure. This will also help minimize swelling to your eyes.
- It is common for your hands and feet to swell the first couple weeks after procedure. To reduce swelling, it helps to elevate your arms and legs with pillows when you are lying or sitting.

**DIET:**

- A light diet is best after surgery. Start with liquids and progress to soft foods like soups and Jell-O.
- Stay on a soft diet with high protein for 2-3 days following the procedure. Avoid spicy foods, sugar-free sweeteners and carbonated drinks to reduce gas, bloating and nausea.

**ACTIVITIES:**

- The first week you should plan on remaining relatively at rest at home.
- Do NOT pick or scratch at the treated area.
- Your healing time totally depends upon the depth of your treatment. You can expect to be down for at least 1-2 weeks.
- The second and third week you may gradually resume activity (easy walk, a casual dinner, go out to a movie).
- After four weeks gradual resumption of athletic activities is allowed.
- Refrain from raising blood pressure for four weeks after surgery to prevent bleeding.
  - No hot baths, showers, spas for the first three weeks.
  - Cardio exercise and swimming may resume 4 weeks following surgery with clearance from Dr. Brent.
- You must refrain from all extensive sun exposure and heat for a minimum of two months.

**EXPECTATIONS:**

- During the first week after laser therapy, the skin enters a crusting phase where the epithelial covering peels off to reveal new underlying skin.
- During this early healing phase, there is swelling, and the patient must rest and avoid all strenuous activities.
- During the second week, fresh new pink skin becomes apparent, and the wound care greatly diminishes. The patient should still sleep with the head elevated at night and can gradually return to normal activities.
- The reddish tone to the skin now starts to fade to a pink or bronzed tone and the patient returns to a normal moisturizer and makeup.
- By six weeks after the procedure, the patient can return to twice weekly Retin-A treatments and their normal skin care regimen. Once the skin color returns to a more normal color the patients begin to enjoy their newly resurfaced skin.
- Sunscreen and healthy living are the only requirements!

**FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:**

- Every patient heals at different rates, but typically you will be seen one week after your procedure and again at 6 weeks.
- The purpose of these appointments is to check your healing progress.
- Please call to schedule your appointments. The Beverly Hills office phone number is (310) 273-1001 and the Santa Barbara office phone number is (805) 898-9299.

**QUESTIONS & CONCERNS:**

- If you have questions or concerns regarding your procedure, please email Kristina at [kristina@drbrent.com](mailto:kristina@drbrent.com) or email Dr. Brent Moelleken at [drbrent@drbrent.com](mailto:drbrent@drbrent.com).
- Please call the office at (310) 273-1001 if you have increased pain at surgical incision sites, redness, sudden swelling, warmth, pus, drainage, or a fever greater than 101.5°F.
- Please visit an emergency room or call 911 if you have shortness of breath or leg swelling with pain to rule out a pulmonary embolism or blood clot which could be deadly if left untreated.

**HELPFUL ITEMS TO PURCHASE BEFORE SURGERY:**

- \_\_\_ Valtrex Prescription- Take two days prior and continue 1 tablet twice a day for 7 days after surgery
- \_\_\_ Keflex – antibiotic
- \_\_\_ Pain medications (prescription, if needed and over-the counter)
- \_\_\_ Cetaphil Facial Wash
- \_\_\_ Aquaphor Healing Ointment (over-the-counter)
- \_\_\_ Any type of terry cloth headband (to keep hair away during facial washings)
- \_\_\_ Stool Softener (i.e., Colace) to aid with any constipation from pain medication
- \_\_\_ Pillow wedge or extra pillows (to keep head at a 45° angle)
- \_\_\_ Thermometer (monitor your temperature after surgery and make sure it stays below 101.5°F)

**ADDITIONAL POST-OP NOTES:**

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