

Laser Resurfacing

In laser resurfacing, sometimes called "laser peel," a type of carbon dioxide (CO₂) laser is used to remove areas of damaged or wrinkled skin, layer by layer. The procedure is most commonly used to minimize the appearance of fine lines, especially around the mouth and the eyes. However, it is also effective in treating facial scars or areas of uneven pigmentation. Laser resurfacing may be performed on the whole face or in specific regions. Often, the procedure is done in conjunction with another cosmetic operation, such as a facelift or eyelid surgery. Laser resurfacing is still a very new procedure. However, it has been shown that in some cases, this surgical method produces less bleeding, bruising and post-operative discomfort than is typically seen with other resurfacing methods.

The "weekend" skin peel or micro-laser peel is also performed with the laser. Often a fractionated laser technique is utilized. It is an intra-epidermal laser peel that can precisely ablate the outermost layers of the skin. The procedure can be individually tailored to the nature of the condition to be corrected. Skin conditions such as: wrinkles, scars, acne scars, keratoses, or pigmentary problems can be successfully treated with the fractionated laser technique. If you are looking for more than microdermabrasion or light chemical peels, and have shorter time for a prolonged healing process, then the micro-laser peel might be a good choice. Anticipate increased costs as compared to microdermabrasion or a light chemical peel.

Laser resurfacing is performed using a beam of laser energy which vaporizes the upper layers of damaged skin at specific and controlled depth of penetration. It's clear that laser resurfacing may offer a number of advantages over other resurfacing methods: precision, little (if any) bleeding and less post-operative discomfort. However, laser resurfacing isn't for everyone. In some cases, an alternative skin resurfacing treatment, such as dermabrasion or chemical peel, may still be a better choice for you. Remember no matter which procedure you choose pre operative treatment with retinoids, antibiotics or antiviral agents may be required. Consult with your plastic surgeon prior to your procedure.

All resurfacing treatments work essentially the same way. First, the outer layers of damaged skin are stripped away. Then, as new cells form during the healing process, a smoother, tighter, younger-looking skin surface appears. Laser resurfacing is a new method being used by plastic surgeons to remove damaged or wrinkled skin. It's also important to consider the length of recovery when choosing among the skin-resurfacing alternatives. The more aggressive the resurfacing procedure is, the more prolonged the recovery is likely to be. "Light" resurfacing procedures, such as superficial chemical peels or superficial laser resurfacing, offer shorter recovery times. However, these lighter procedures may need to be repeated multiple times to achieve results comparable to those achieved with more aggressive/ deeper techniques.

In many cases, facial wrinkles form in localized areas, such as near the eyes or around the mouth. The laser can be precisely controlled so that only these specific areas are targeted. Patients with olive skin, brown skin or black skin may be at increased risk for pigmentation changes no matter what type of resurfacing method is recommended.

Your plastic surgeon will evaluate your skin characteristics and make recommendations accordingly.

Remember, having laser resurfacing can help enhance your appearance and your self-confidence, but it won't completely remove all facial flaws or prevent you from aging.

Lines that occur as a result of natural movements of the face - smiling, squinting, blinking, talking, chewing - will inevitably recur. Your plastic surgeon can suggest ways to help you preserve your results by protecting yourself from sun exposure or using skin care maintenance

treatments, such as medicated facial creams. Before you decide to have laser resurfacing, think carefully about your expectations and discuss them with your plastic surgeon.