

Intense Pulsed Light Therapy

Frequently Asked Questions

How is IPL different from a laser?

Intense pulsed light is a term often used interchangeably with the term "laser" when in fact the two are very different. Lasers emit a single beam of light at a very specific wavelength (like a laser pointer), whereas IPL contains light of all visible wavelengths (more like a light bulb). As a result, the IPL is able to treat a wide range of skin conditions at a superficial level, but does not have the ability to target specific structures, especially those that are deeper in the skin.

How does IPL work?

IPL produces its effects in a manner similar to the laser, in that it targets the pigmented (or colored) portions of the skin – like broken capillaries and brown "age spots" – and eliminates them via a thermal reaction. This same thermal process also stimulates collagen production in the skin, which results in smoothing out of finer wrinkles, tighter pores and leaves the skin with an overall smoother and radiant appearance.

Are the results permanent ?

While the results from a series of 4-6 treatments can last for several years, your skin ages as you do, and many people find that new blemishes arise over time, necessitating further maintenance treatments.

What is a PhotoFACIAL?

The PhotoLight is a "non-ablative" treatment for the skin that minimizes the signs of aging and sun-damage by removal of brown spots, pigment, red veins and the "blush" of rosacea.

What is "non-ablative"?

A "non-ablative" treatment leaves your skin intact and undamaged. The pulse emits light that passes easily through the upper layers of your skin to the unwanted red and brown pigment underneath. The light is absorbed by these pigments and transformed into heat that damages the irregularities. As an additional benefit, your skin's collagen framework is enhanced.

How many treatments can I expect?

It may take several treatments to get the desired results. We say to expect up to 4-6 but, in most cases, it can take less and in rare cases, not help at all. You can be treated every 4-6 weeks.

What does it feel like?

It may feel like a rubber band snap but is usually very minimal. Unlike most pulsed light systems, no numbing creams or gels are required.

What can I expect after treatment?

It may feel like a slight sunburn sensation for a few days following the treatment. In some cases, it may look like a superficial burn and, in rare cases, a blister may appear. It is very important to follow all post treatment instructions and stay out the sun for at least a 4 week period pre and post treatment to avoid irritation to the treated area. If you cannot avoid sun exposure then a sunscreen of no less than 30 SPF should be used.

How does the PhotoLightFACIAL™ compare with other types of treatments, such as chemical peels, laser resurfacing and microdermabrasion?

These procedures both aggressively remove the upper layers of skin and can be painful. They typically require several days to several weeks of healing time. They are not recommended for the use on hands or chest. Microdermabrasion removes only the most superficial layers of the skin. It cannot treat the underlying pigment or redness.

Intense Pulsed Light Therapy Patient Information

- ☞ Some discomfort may be experienced during treatment
- ☞ Sun exposure or use of a tanning bed pre or post treatment is a risk for possible pigment change or blistering
- ☞ During the healing process, there is a slight possibility that the treated area can become either lighter (hypo-pigmentation) or darker (hyper-pigmentation) in color compared to the surrounding skin. This is usually a temporary condition; however, on rare occasions it can be permanent. It is **IMPORTANT** that you follow all post-treatment instructions carefully
- ☞ **Sun exposure, tanning beds, sunless tanning lotions, and tanning creams are to be avoided for at least 4 weeks prior to, during, and 4 weeks after the course of treatment**, otherwise there is a risk of pigment change or blistering. **Sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher should be applied during the course of treatments.**
- ☞ There is a possibility of rare side effects such as scarring or permanent discoloration
- ☞ Other side effects, such as swelling, blistering, crusting, or flaking of the treated area, may require one to three weeks to heal. Once any of these conditions have healed, the treated area may still be sensitive to the sun for an additional two to four weeks, or possibly longer in some patients.
- ☞ **Each individual's treatment response is different**; therefore it could require multiple treatments to achieve desired results

Intense Pulsed Light Therapy Pre-Treatment Instructions

- ☞ **If you've started any antibiotics or any other medications that may make you photo sensitive, please let us know.** We may have to reschedule your appointment. Also notify the technician if there has been any change in your health status (new medications, heart condition, etc.).
- ☞ **Sun exposure and tanning beds should be avoided for several days' pre and post treatment** to avoid blistering. If self tanner is used, you should wait 2 weeks after application to avoid any discoloration. If sun exposure is unavoidable, use a **minimum SPF 30 SUNSCREEN (UVA/UVB).**
- ☞ **For maximum desired results, multiple treatments will be required at regular scheduled intervals.**

Intense Pulsed Light Therapy Post Treatment Instructions

- ☞ **Care should be taken to prevent trauma to the treated area** for the first 24 hours following treatment.
- ☞ **A minimum SPF 30 sunscreen (UVA/UVB) should be used for any sun exposure during your treatment.** Sun tanning and tanning beds should be avoided pre and post treatments.
- ☞ Avoid any strenuous workout, hot tubs and spas for 24 hours after treatment.
- ☞ **If the skin is broken or a blister appears, contact us.** Also, for further protection, keep the affected area covered and moist with Vaseline and avoid direct sunlight while experiencing these symptoms. Delayed blistering secondary to sun exposure has been noted up to 72 hours post treatment.
- ☞ Ice, chilled cold packs or wet wash cloth put in freezer for 2-3 minutes may be applied post-treatment as needed for patient comfort. Tylenol may be taken for any discomfort.
- ☞ Follow-up examination is recommended 2 weeks after your first visit
- ☞ If subsequent treatments are needed, follow-up should be 6 weeks
- ☞ **If you have any questions or concerns, please be sure to call our office at 519.667.1212**