

Pigmented Lesions Frequently Asked Questions

What exactly is a pigmented lesion?

Pigmented lesions are all the result of the accumulation of excess melanin, the substance that gives our skin its color. Most of us have some sort of pigmented lesion. Some we are born with (birthmarks) and others we acquire as we age (these include brown age spots (lentigines), freckles (ephelids), and moles (nevi)). Women may also acquire skin pigmentation associated with pregnancy, childbirth, oral contraceptives, or estrogen replacement therapy.

How many treatments can I expect?

It may take several treatments to get the desired results. We say to expect up to 5 but in most cases it can take less and in rare cases not help at all.

What does it feel like?

It may feel like a rubber band snap, but is usually very minimal.

What can I expect after treatment?

Usually within approximately 20 minutes you will see a slightly darker color of the area treated. It can take up to 3 weeks for the discoloration to slough off. 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 following 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 do I prepare for the treatments?

It is very important for you to stay out of the sun as you could cause discoloration in the area treated. We recommend 4 weeks prior and through out the treatments series. If you cannot avoid sun exposure you should use a minimum sun screen protection of 30 SPF or higher.

Pigmented Lesions Patient Information

- ☞ Some discomfort may be experienced during laser treatment.
- ☞ **Crusting or flaking** of the treated area may occur and take up to 3 weeks to slough off
- ☞ 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. During the healing process, there is a slight possibility that the treated area can become darker (hyper-pigmentation) or lighter (hypo-pigmentation) in color.
- ☞ There is a possibility of rare side effects such as scarring, or permanent discoloration of the area
- ☞ Other side effects such as swelling, blistering, or a sunburn sensation may occur
- ☞ If you have a suntan the surrounding area may also lighten (hypopigmentation). This is usually a temporary condition; however, on rare occasions it can be permanent. It is very **IMPORTANT** that I 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 laser treatment**, otherwise there is a risk of possible pigment change or blistering. **Sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher should be applied during the course of treatments.**
- ☞ Each individual's response is different, therefore it could require multiple treatments to achieve the desired results.

Pigmented Lesions 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 *may* be required at regular scheduled intervals.**

Pigmented Lesions Post Treatment Instructions

- ☞ Care should be taken to prevent trauma to the treated area for the first 24-48 hours following 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.
- ☞ Treated lentigines (age spots) usually darken after treatment, and crusting begins to form within a few days. This crusting usually resolves in 1 to 3 weeks. It should be allowed to naturally flake off for best results.
- ☞ If significant crusting occurs beyond the normal flaking of the treated lesions, petroleum jelly (Vaseline™) can be applied.
- ☞ Localized erythema may also be present and typically resolve 24 to 48 hours
- ☞ Avoid hot tubs or spas for at least 24 to 48 hours after treatment.
- ☞ Make-up may be applied as long as the skin is not broken.
- ☞ **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.
- ☞ The recommended time interval between treatments is 3 weeks or longer, once the crusting has cleared.
- ☞ Avoid artificial tanning, or sun exposure without sun protection of a 30 SPF following treatment.
- ☞ **If you have any questions or concerns, please be sure to call our office at 519.667.1212**