

FRACTIONAL ABLATIVE LASER PROCEDURE (CO₂ or Er-YAG laser)

WHAT IS FRACTIONAL LASER THERAPY?

The CO₂ and Er-YAG lasers are designed to accelerate the renewal and rejuvenation of the skin on the face and body, specifically smoothing wrinkles, smoothing rough, photo-aged, loose skin, as well as skin with large pores and increased sebum secretion, such as on the bridge of the nose. They are used to remove pigment irregularities and non-threatening growths. We are successful at smoothing scars, resulting from acne, injuries or surgeries, and stretch marks.

WHICH LASER DO WE USE?

The CO₂ or Er-YAG laser is used; the choice of the laser is decided by the doctor performing the procedure.

HOW IS THE TREATMENT PERFORMED?

Before the facial treatment, the patient receives medication to protect against herpes outbreaks. The day before the procedure, Valtrex should be taken – one tablet each at 8 am and 8 pm – and on the day of the procedure at 8 am. The treatment is continued for three days after the procedure.

Arrive half an hour before the appointment, without make-up, for photo-documentation and to apply anaesthetic cream. The skin must not be tanned before the treatment. Sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat for sun protection are required.

The procedure is a little painful. The choice of the appropriate laser depends on the purpose and is the doctor's domain. The rays radiate – fractionally – just part of the skin. There they cause numerous small burns of precisely defined depth. Depending on the purpose and the extent of therapy, the lasers can effect only the skin surface or also deeper layers. After the treatment, the skin is lubricated with ointment; it is applied several times a day until healing, whenever there is a feeling of dry tension. The skin heals from the not irradiated surrounding area in three to ten days. After treatment small haemorrhages can occur on skin, however they are not dangerous. The mildly burning sensation, like after sunburns, disappears after an hour or two. Swelling and redness develop, but it usually resolves in two or three days. From the second day, tiny scales may form on the skin, which peel off after three to seven days. The patients can wash themselves with water and shave one day after the procedure. The skin must be protected with sunscreen with a high sun protection factor, moisture cream and adequate clothing. As long as the skin is red, we advise against spicy food, alcoholic beverages, sauna, Turkish baths and heavy physical strain.

HOW MANY REPETITIONS ARE NECESSARY?

An aesthetically positive effect can be noticed already after the first therapy. To get the full effect, it is advisable to repeat it three to five times in a few week or month intervals.

THE SUCCESS OF THE PROCEDURE

The effect of the treatment is visible only several weeks after the laser therapy cycle has been completed.

CONTRAINDICATIONS OR FOR WHOM IS THE PROCEDURE NOT SUITABLE?

Therapy with the Er-YAG and CO₂ fractional laser is not suitable for patients who are allergic to antibiotic ointments, have photosensitive skin, or open wounds on areas, intended for treatment, due to injury, diabetes, chronic diseases of the soft tissues, radiation therapy or chemotherapy. It is

not suitable for those recovering from a herpes simplex virus infection, have cancer, have unrealistic expectations, or are unwilling or unable to follow after-therapy skin care instructions. We should be warned about taking anti-clotting medication.

SIDE EFFECTS AND COMPLICATIONS

As with any treatment, there are possible complications after laser treatment in the form of infections, prolonged healing, bleeding, discolouration, sensation disturbances, inflammation, necrosis, ulceration, transient ectropion, scarring, watery bubbles and prolonged redness, but if the instructions are strictly followed, there are no significant complications and laser treatment is very safe.

POST-PROCEDURE INSTRUCTIONS

After the procedure, saline compresses are applied, a cream is applied to speed up skin regeneration and sunscreen is applied.

At home, patients take Valtrex twice a day for three days after the procedure, cold moist compresses for pain relief for 20–30 minutes as needed, restorative ointment several times a day when the skin feels dry or tight, and washing with saline or boiled water twice a day is recommended. The area to be treated should not be rubbed, but gently blotted with a tissue (gauze). Sleeping with your head elevated for four days after the procedure reduces swelling. Tasks that cause flushing should be avoided for two weeks, any aggressive procedures on the facial skin (peeling, dermabrasion, visiting the beautician, etc.) for four weeks, and irritants on the face for six weeks. Four weeks after the procedure, white or red cells or pimples may appear, which clear up on their own. Until the healing process is complete, you are not allowed to go to the sauna or to have a massage on the treated area. If blisters, scabs or scales appear, apply the prescribed antibiotic cream twice a day until improvement; regular sun protection (goggles, hat, SPF 50) is required.

Expected course of healing after the treatment:

Days 0–4: skin will be red, swollen (especially eyelids, cheeks), sensitive, with pinpoint bleeding.

Days 5–7: the skin is less red, becoming dry, itchy, with visible skin flaking. The redness lasts from one to two weeks or, to a lesser extent, longer.

After one month: use of a normal moisturiser and regular sun protection are recommended.

We recommend a check-up after three and after six months.

You can return to work or daily activities 7–14 days after the procedure.

Prior to the examination, you must also fill out the Informed Consent form together with the doctor as regulated by the Patient Rights Act and the Doctor's Duty to Obtain an Informed Consent. The rules for filling out the form and the statement are presented upon your arrival at our institution.

PLEASE ASK US ABOUT ANYTHING YOU DID NOT UNDERSTAND IN THIS NOTICE AND WANT ADDITIONAL EXPLANATION FOR.

We will take care of your health and well-being to the best of our ability. Thank you for your confidence in us.

Prepared by:

Janja Šmid Vauhnik, MD, Dermatovenerology Specialist